

Workshop from Home with Justin Rothshank

Q&A Transcript

have you spent any time looking for a liner glaze that doesnt use as much spodumene with it being so expensive in recent years?

Great question. I wish I could say I've done that research, but alas, i spent a lot of money on spodumene last summer to keep using Darby.

I only use about 5 gallons of this glaze a year, and I've been trying to minimize that even more.

But replacing spodumene is on my list for research

Justin Rothshank

I've been following your low soda work for a few years now, and I have been doing my own research in it in my undergrad studies. Last semester I tried out the Darby Clear for the first time and it came out (both in the electric and soda) so glossy, like a candy coating, and so runny it stuck to the kiln shelf in some areas. Is that normal?

Darby gets more glossy the hotter you fire it. I also apply it pretty thin. And if it gets hit with soda in the firing it can be even more glossy.

Justin Rothshank

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I tend not to use Darby on the outside of pieces, as I like the raw surface in the soda kiln. So the runny nature of the glaze is less problematic for me.

Justin Rothshank

How was that lid gallery made? it looks like it might be thrown as one piece and cut into?6

Yes, that jar was thrown as a closed form. Then, after drying, the lid was cut off.

Justin Rothshank

Does Borax change the atmosphere or "seasoning" of the kiln if the kiln is primarily used just with soda ash?

I'm not sure. I still use borax in every batch that I mix.

However, I'm now on firing #125 with my kiln, so I have decreased the amount of soda solution I spray into the kiln over the years.

Justin Rothshank

Does the borax promote flashing?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Does the borax promote flashing?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Why spray the soda vs other ways to introduce soda

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

can you use the borax slip for cone 10 soda if lightly?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Was the white on the outside of the cups white slip fired on in the bisque firing?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

How did you settle on cone 3 for your low fire work? I know you refer to 04-3 as the range for low fire soda artists profiled in your book.

This is the temperature that gives me the surface results that I visually like the most.

To be clear, the temperature range between cone 1 and 4 is pretty minimal. Depending on how even I fire the kiln, I could get results that fall into that full range.

Justin Rothshank

is the door soft brick?

yes

Justin Rothshank

music is loud

live answered

Justin Rothshank

Is there a way to get more flashing (like what tends to happen at higher temperatures) as well as the color retention (that happens at lower temperatures)?

Yes! I will try to touch on this live, but I have started to do a bit of a “micro” reduction cool at the end of firings to help encourage more color on the surface.

Justin Rothshank

Your glazing materials recipes indicate a range from cone 04 - 5. Just confirming that's correct.

Yes, Darby should work within that range. However, it will look different when firing colder. And will also look different when firing in an electric kiln.

Justin Rothshank

flashing effect from closeness of loading pots, how close is close for cone 3 compared to c10?

I've found that if the pieces are unglazed, they can often actually be touching in the soda firing.

Obviously, if its a glazed surface, the glaze will stick to whatever is touching.

Justin Rothshank

Do you think that it is possible to do a low soda firig in a oil drum kiln?

i would assume that is possible, though I've never tried it. as long as the soda isn't corrodng your equipment.

Justin Rothshank

Would baking soda promote flashing Maybe more than borax? I want flashing....
to clarify...you're looking for the colors created by a reducing atmosphere?

or, you're looking for the texture created by spraying the soda?

Justin Rothshank

In a cone 10 firing do you use the same soda mix?

yes, I do.

Justin Rothshank

do you recommend the corralite shelves for C10?

yes. I use corelites up to cone 12.

Justin Rothshank

Are you firing pretty oxidized on the way up? Any body reduction or anything like that?

I fire as neutral as possible on the way up. No intentional body reduction. When spraying, reduction is happening.

Upon shutting down the kiln I now create a slight reducing environment. I call it a “micro reduction” cooling. This seems to aid in color flashing.

Justin Rothshank

When you were talking to other potters when writing for the book, were others doing a body reduction / if so what cone in and out were they reducing for body?

When writing the book (and filming this video), virtually nobody was doing intentional reduction at cone 3.

I’m not adding a “micro reduction” during the cooling process.

This is a difficult process to test, as too much reduction can be very bad for iron rich clay bodies.

Too much heat can also be very bad. So its a tight window to find success.

Justin Rothshank

cool

how much reduction are you in?

I fire as neutral as possible.

Justin Rothshank

A friend put some white earthenware in a low fire soda and the work looked like bisqueware when it came out - basically no soda effects at all in an otherwise juicy firing. Any idea why that might happen?

lack of iron in the clay body means that there was nothing for the carbon/soda to attach too

Justin Rothshank

is that a railraod in the backgroun?

yes

Justin Rothshank

Do you do wood firing at the same temps

my old wood kiln had a chamber that I used for firing earthenware. This is how I first tested these ideas 15 years ago.

I intend to fire my new wood kiln to cone 3 also.

Justin Rothshank

Didn't you also speak about applying decals to bisque? Is it just harder to get it to stick rather than the glossy surface

I will apply iron decals to leatherhard clay prior to the bisque firing. The moisture in the leatherhard clay keeps the decal adhered through the bisque firing.

I don't put decals on bisque ware because they are very difficult to keep on until firing.

Justin Rothshank

What are the range of clay absorption % range for vitrification of the clay bodies you use? is it a concern to keep it low % ?

I have not measured the absorption % precisely. What's more important to me is to find a clay body and glaze that fit together so that liquids can be held within the functional piece.

I can also use liquid quartz as a post firing application to aid in making pots functional.

the soda fired surface also makes each piece water tight.

Justin Rothshank

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Justin Rothshank Wide Shot

19:10

lack of iron in the clay body means that there was nothing for the carbon/soda to attach too

when you refire the decals will the soda on the cup damage your electric kiln

other than potentially sticking to the kiln shelf, no. re-wadding the pot can prevent kiln shelf damage.

Justin Rothshank

Is crazing something youve put work into avoiding / do you get any crazing with the raw soda surfaces / do you do you glaze the insides of your jars and larger pieces?*

i haven't had major issues with crazing.

if pieces are larger, and intended to be mostly decorative, i avoid glazing them at all.

I don't glaze plates either. I allow the vaporized soda to be the "glaze" on these surfaces.

Justin Rothshank

thank you

so this would be happening while loading inside the kiln right? not before and then transferring to the kiln?

live answered

Kaitlynne Flanigan

Do you know the Specific Gravity range of the greenware slips you use?

live answered

Kaitlynne Flanigan

How are you sourcing your decals? Is there a company you work directly with or are you printing your own decals

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

regarding the adding the wood, this is after you have shut down the burners?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

How many hours do your cone 3 firings last? Do you have an ideal rate of climb for your firings?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Why do you not use strait soda ash in the mix you spray?

live answered

Kaitlynne Flanigan

I'm using a white earthenware that is not a great color on the unglazed areas. What would be a good guess on the best wash to enhance the clay?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

what is the process for cleaning up the shells, post fire?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

I know downfiring is something folks do for cone 10 - would there be any advantages to downfiring with cone 3?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Do you use commercial underglazes or make your own? Also how thick do you apply them?

Justin primarily uses Amaco Velvet underglazes, as well as chalk underglazes from Amaco and Stone's Handmade. You could certainly use homemade underglazes.

Ash Neukamm

Is it possible for someone to copy and send out the chat?

Yes. The chat and Q&A will be available after the webinar comes to a close when we send out the video and updated resources document within 48 hours.

Kaitlynne Flanigan

How many soda ports - Side / Front / Back - do you recommend for a kiln your size?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

will borax work at cone 6?

live answered

Kaitlynne Flanigan

downfiring does builds crystal growth which can be both a postive and negative.

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

would you also steer away from white clay in a cone six soda fire if you were looking for flashing?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Speaking to your teapots, what do you think about when you are making that form? did it go through many iterations?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Is there a difference between the porcelain slip you use and a standard use-all white slip?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

I did a cone 3 soda firing a couple of years ago inspired by your book...i highly recommend it for all.

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Just a thank you for your book. I've learned so much from it

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

Thank you! So many good directions and ideas! Well done!

live answered

Kaitlynne Flanigan

a little off track but do you have a recommendation for a great resource for mid fire soda firing?

live answered

Jennifer Harnetty

is there a mailing list for webinars

Yes, you can sign up for our emails directly on ceramicartsnetwork.org by making an account. We recommend subscribing to the CLAYflicks Spotlight

Ash Neukamm