

# *Loading and firing an electric kiln*

## Placement of shelves and kiln posts

- Load the kiln to even out mass distribution of work.
- Load the shelves by alternating height: short, then tall, etc.
- Don't place shelves even with thermocouples and keep one inch from elements.
- Kiln posts should stack on top of each other throughout the kiln.
- Each shelf needs three posts to hold it up.
- Two or more posts can be stacked, even broken kiln shelves can be used.
- Clay wadding may be used to even out wobbles when stacking shelves.
- When placing a shelf, do not bump the thermocouple or gouge the kiln brick.
- Half shelves can alternate, use large pieces of broken shelves for extra layers.
- There needs to be at least a ¼ inch between pots and the overhead shelf.

## Loading of greenware to avoid warping and breaking

- Check dryness of pots before loading (feel for moisture against cheek, look at color, check the thickness) and load dry or almost dry pots.
- In the bisque firing, pots may touch each other & the kiln furniture.
- Keep pots at least an inch away from the elements.
- Pots of similar size may be stacked rim-to-rim or foot-to-foot.
- Lightweight pots may be nested, but no more than 3-4, depending on weight.
- Avoid placing pots inside each other to cause breakage & trapping from shrinkage.
- Avoid placing heavy pots on rims, knobs, lids, and handles due to breakage.
- When nesting pots, stack so that the foot areas match each other.
- Flat objects and tiles may be stacked on top of each other.
- Tiles may be placed on end as long as the edge is sturdy.

- Avoid uneven weight distribution when nesting pots.
- Do not place heavy pots on thin or lightweight pots.
- Always fire lids on the pots in the bisque.
- If work is slightly damp, give it room for further drying during preheat.
- Work over ½ inch thick may need a slower firing such as a sculpture firing.
- Large plates, pots, and sculpture can be placed on a bed of sand or grog.
- Careful of smudging when loading work with oxides or underglazes.

## Loading a glaze firing

- Glazed work may not touch each other, the furniture or the kiln wall.
- Do not load wet or freshly glazed work without a preheat.
- No glaze should be on the bottom of pots.
- If work is heavily glazed, place on a kiln-washed tile in the kiln or do not fire.
- Do not place pots or furniture on top of a glaze drip.
- Use a tile to set work on if the shelf is messed up.
- Small items (stuffers) may be placed under the overhang of pots.
- Always place a cone pack on the middle shelf, by the peephole.
- If needed, stilt so work is steady and won't fall off.

## Firing a bisque or glaze

- Use the correct firing schedule.
- Use sufficient time for preheat.