

Glaze Recipe



Rosalie Dodds has been experimenting with glazes for over 40 years. Here she shares the base recipe she uses to create the surface textures on her thrown stoneware

I first experienced the possibilities of clay as a mature student while studying to be a teacher. Of all the media I came into contact with, clay was my favourite. In 1979, I undertook an extra year's training in art and craft at Brighton Polytechnic, where I learnt a range of skills on working with clay, glaze technology and mould-making. These skills enabled me to teach art as a specialist subject in secondary schools while developing my own work.

On the course, we were encouraged to experiment with glazes, having been made aware of the properties of glaze materials. For stoneware temperatures we were given the starting point of a base glaze of 70/20/10: potash feldspar 70, whiting 20, China clay 10, which creates an opaque glaze (fired at 1250°C). I worked on the glaze adding magnesium carbonate to create a matte finish as I found the base glaze too shiny – I was looking for more stone-like qualities. I also added tin oxide to create a whiter glaze and a higher amount of China clay to create the right melt. I did several tests, adjusting the amount with each testing, and finally arrived at a successful recipe.

Images: courtesy of the artist

I am interested in surface textures and began experimenting with silicon carbide glazes and slips in order to achieve an organic surface. My inspiration for stoneware surfaces comes from natural objects, beaches, cliffs and rock strata textures. I have always been inspired by textures and forms in the landscape and seashore, especially the chalk cliffs and flint seams found locally where I live on the south coast of England.

I was interested to read an article in *Ceramic Review* by Emmanuel Cooper on the silicon carbide slip recipes used by Lucie Rie. This encouraged me to try my own. The slip I use is from Craft Crank Clay. I dry out the clay, crush it, weigh it (300g), then add silicon carbide (20g) and water and mix it to a slip-like consistency.


I apply this slip once the work is dry. I brush it on, deciding where I want the slip to appear. I use strips of torn newspaper dipped in water and pressed onto the clay as a resist, this allows some areas of the pot to show through as a white glaze. I then brush oxides over the slip. I mainly using titanium dioxide (cream colour) or cobalt oxide (blue) in a solution of water. I do this by eye. Titanium is not critical to the thickness of the mixture, but cobalt is more difficult to judge, if it is too heavy it can be disastrous as too much flux is added to the mix.

Once glazed, the silicon carbide slip alone produces a mid-grey shade. Small variations can happen with the thickness of the slip and the strength of the oxides – I enjoy this variety, although I try and keep all variables the same.

When the slip is dry, the work is bisque-fired to 1000°C. Oxides can still be added after the bisque stage, but I have

found it is best to do this before as the dry oxide powder can migrate into the glaze bucket.

The glaze is poured into the inside of the pot first before dipping the outside in the white glaze. It is then fired to 1235°C, although I sometimes adjust the temperature on the pyrometer depending on the pack of the kiln. I have two ways of using slip, either with resist where the glaze is poured over the whole outside of the piece, or incising lines at the leatherhard stage and dabbing slip into the grooves. The slip then needs the white glaze brushed over the grooves to produce the bubbled surface.

My work continues to evolve and develop. I am currently using stronger coloured stains to offset the bands of silicon carbide slip. Subtle details such as the thickness of the glaze adds to the chemistry and helps to produce differences in surface textures. 

For more details visit rosaliedoddsceramics.co.uk

WHITE STONEWARE GLAZE

Potash feldspar	70
Whiting	20
China clay	18
Magnesium carbonate	10
Tin oxide	5

Fired to 1235°C in an electric kiln

