

VisArts keeps four high-fire clay bodies in stock: a grogged light colored clay body (Standard 553), a smooth light-colored clay body (Little Loafers), a grogged dark clay body (Brooklyn Red), and a smooth dark clay body (Standard 266)

Grog is pre-fired crushed clay. It is about the size and consistency of sand. Grog is added to clay bodies to reduce shrinkage and increase the strength of the clay during drying. Since grogged clay bodies dry more slowly, they are less likely to crack during drying. Grogged clay bodies are suggested for sculptures and projects which vary in thickness. We highly recommend that beginners start with a grogged clay body.

Ungrogged clay bodies are smoother, and generally less abrasive on potters' hands and fingernails. Clay bodies without grog are more difficult to use but provide smoother finished surfaces.

Shrinkage: All clay shrinks as it dries, then shrinks again during firing. Clay shrinkage is published by clay manufacturers as a percentage, which includes both drying shrinkage, and firing shrinkage. Clay that shrinks more quickly or has a higher percentage of shrinkage is more likely to crack during drying and firing.

Clay Bodies Offered by Visarts:

Standard 553 is a grogged buff (light creamy color) clay body. We recommend 553 for most beginning pottery students. Shrinkage at Cone 5: 12%

Little Loafers is a smooth off-white clay body. Since Little Loafers does not have grog, it shrinks more abruptly as it dries. We suggest this clay for intermediate to advanced students. Shrinkage at Cone 5: 11%

Brooklyn Red is a brick-red grogged clay body. Brooklyn red is colored with red iron oxide, making it very difficult to clean (scrub all surfaces thoroughly after using this clay). Because Brooklyn Red is grogged, we recommend it for sculptures and projects with varying degrees of thickness when the student wants a dark or earthy red colored clay body. Shrinkage at Cone 5:12%

Standard 266, or Dark Brown Stoneware is a dark brown smooth clay body. It is about the color of milk chocolate and is colored with manganese dioxide. We suggest this clay for intermediate to advanced students. Shrinkage at Cone 5:13%

Clay Bodies Occasionally Carried by Visarts:

Visarts sometimes carries the following clay bodies. They are not always in stock, but you can special order them, and we'll include them in our next shipment if our supplier has them available.

Standard 112 speckled clay is a light brown stoneware with dark brown speckles that melt out into glazes. The dark brown speckles are granular manganese. Shrinkage at Cone 5: 12.5%

Frost Porcelain is a bright white, translucent mid-range porcelain which is incredibly difficult to use without cracking. It is usually more expensive than other clay bodies Shrinkage at Cone 5: 11%