

NORTHCOTE POTTERY SUPPLIES
TECHNICAL TIPS AND PRODUCT INFORMATION #27

CERAMIC PUBLIC ART PROJECT PREPARATION & EXECUTION

1. Test all your materials before commencing

Ensure that application, thickness, firing temperatures, firing schedules etc. are observed and recorded and that you create some 'real' samples/trials of the styles of work that will be done on the project. These will aid others to understand the concept/style/materials while they are participating, especially if they have no pottery experience.

2. Plan realistically

Keep in mind that you may be working through winter, that large projects take a long time to fire, and organizing group projects does take longer to co-ordinate than you anticipate. Or, if working through summer, the weather will dramatically aid drying, and you may have to retard the drying process for large works.

3. Consult the installation person/s (tradesperson/tiler etc) early

Show them a sample piece so they can assess the weight, fixing methods etc. which will be suitable before the work is done so that they ensure you are making a work that can be installed inexpensively, safely, effectively and on time.

4. Spread the word

Keep others informed regularly of your progress and their enthusiasm will carry you along when 'it all seems too hard'. Input and assistance from outside your immediate project group can often be very useful and timely. Tell parents, other staff, other students, school supporters etc via any method you can use – newsletters, talks etc. Perhaps someone will volunteer just when you need them most.

5. Use this opportunity to profile your subject / your practice / your community

Major projects are a great way to 'show-off' to the rest of the art world/school/community... this may pay dividends later when you need to seek funding, permission for special projects/events, etc. Take advantage of this opportunity to 'shine'.

6. Plan to 'unveil' the project somehow

This will give the project added prestige – do it at your annual Art Show, community fair, school Open Day, parent teacher night, end of year function, etc. so more people see 'what a great job you've done'. It also helps to ensure that all those involved 'own' the project and there will be less chance of vandalism in future because everyone who's been involved will be on guard duty over 'their project'.

7. Document the project

Take the odd photo here and there and you'll be amazed what a great resource this will make and how effective it can be in showing others how the work developed technically and conceptually. Use it at the 'unveiling' to educate your audience. This information could form the basis of a published article in an education, community or ceramic magazine. Put images on the school website etc.

8. Make sure *all* those who participate are recognized

Keep a list as you go along. Thank them personally and also publicly at the unveiling. Install a plaque at the site of the work thanking/recognizing those involved, especially sponsors.

9. Use the happy conclusion/after glow period

The happy conclusion/after glow period of the project is the ideal time to 'plant the seed' of the next project you'd like to tackle – BIGGER, DIFFERENT, BETTER? You'll be flavour of the month, so take advantage of the opportunity.

10. Congratulate yourself!

It couldn't have happened without you. Write to your state Art teachers' journal, newspaper, community newsletter etc. about your experience, put a paragraph in the schools annual report/school magazine, invite the local newspaper along for a photo shoot, take a photo of the work and use it on an Art Department Christmas card/poster/brochure.

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