

ART CLAY COPPER - tips from Art Clay New Zealand



Art Clay Copper can be fired in your Super Petit Kiln at 970oC for 30 minutes. It does not require carbon or a stainless steel container – just fire as you would a piece of Art Clay Silver.

Once fired, Art Clay Copper should immediately be quenched in cold water – most of the oxidised layer that occurs during firing will come off at this time. Any left over oxidisation will need to be cleaned off with pickle.

If you dont immediately quench in cold water and take it out of the kiln, specks of oxidisation can ping off – so be very careful. You can also leave your piece to cool naturally in the kiln. It will still need pickling.

As this oxidisation comes away from the copper, it can take little pieces of your copper piece with it, causing 'pitting'. To help prevent this from happening, sand your piece well with the 3 grades of sandpaper, prior to firing. The sanding dust tends to 'travel,' more so than the Art Clay Silver dust, so keep this in mind.

5gms of copper clay, 1mm thick will take 10 minutes drying with a hairdryer or more than 24 hours naturally – if your piece is thicker than this, please add more time.

You can use your stainless steel brush and burnisher after pickling for polishing or a tumbler. If using a tumber, Art Clay Copper can leave an oxidised dust residue in the polishing solution. This may discolour the surface of Art Clay Silver pieces if the same solution is used. Use a new solution for each polishing. Wenol or Pikal polish is suitable for using on Art Clay Copper. You can also coat your copper piece with a clear acrylic spray to stop oxidisation happening after it is completed.



You can not fire Art Clay Copper with a torch or using a gas cook top.

Shrinkage of Art Clay Copper is 10%. In Its clay state Art Clay Copper is 90% copper and 10% binder and after firing becomes 99.5% copper.

When you open your packet of Art Clay Copper it will naturally start to oxidise straight away. Cover your piece with gladwrap as soon as you are able to keep the air off it. Any unused portions of Art Clay Copper

should be wrapped in several layers of gladwrap and then in an airtight container or bag. If you see some darkening, thinly slice it away and dispose of it. If you don't, when your piece fires, you may find cracks or holes appearing.

If you are making a thick object (with more than 10mm of thickness), there is a possibility of small hollow gaps being created inside the piece after drying. The hollow gap has less chance of forming if you are using a hot plate, kiln or hot air dryer to dry your piece. If you do find a hollow gap after drying and filing/sanding, make some paste and fill the gap. Using Core Cork Clay for a core is also recommended for making a thick piece.

Keep Art Clay Copper at a moderate room temperature and out of direct sunlight.

Art Clay Copper does not come in a syringe type or paste type. To make paste, pinch off a piece of Art Clay Copper and mix it well with water. The consistency of Art Clay Copper is a little more firm than Art Clay Silver and so it will take a bit of mixing. Only make as much paste as you need. It does not store well due to the oxidation. You can put the Art Clay Copper in to an empty syringe but it is quite hard to push/extrude out.

Art Clay Copper is fired at 970°C. This is higher than the melting point of silver. So if you want to combine the two metals, even if you fire the Art Clay Copper first and then add the silver, they will not fuse or adhere together. This is because of the oxidation on the copper occurring before the silver has a chance to fuse to it. If you want the two metals to stick together, it's best to solder or rivet it.

Separate tools are best so your Art Clay Copper doesn't contaminate the Art Clay Silver and vice versa. Either that or clean your tools extremely well.

Be aware that some people are allergic to copper. Covering your piece with a clear acrylic spray is one way of helping prevent an allergic reaction.

Art Clay Copper only comes in a 50gm pack.

