

Clay Plaster and Cob Workshop Adelaide 2024

Workshop Outline (Annie's copy)

Bear in mind this is a flexible, rough outline, and last minute changes could be made depending on all manner of factors such as weather, participants, and the random surprise events life may throw in our path. Building is rarely a programmable experience:)

Thurs 30th

Arrive and settle in

Friday 1st

Morning

- Foraging for clay
- Learn how to find clay, and distinguish it from silt, sand and dirt.
- Jar tests and other more useful clay tests.
- How to turn foraged clay into a usable material.
- Learn what each material in the plaster does, and how to test to find the right quantities of each for your dirt and your project.
- Plaster testing part one.

Afternoon

- How to measure materials.
- Learn about special additives.
- Mixing up a plaster 'mother', part one.

Saturday 2nd

Morning

- Plaster mixing part two. Creating the final material.
- Learn how to prepare a variety of substrates for plastering.
- Learn about primers and how to make them.
- Apply an anchor coat of plaster. Learn the dos and don'ts.
- Learn how the anchor coat application changes depending on the surface to be plastered.

Afternoon

- Learn how to turn clay plaster into a building material.
- The difference between clay plaster, cob and adobe.
- Make adobe bricks
- Using mud as mortar.

Sunday 3rd

Morning

- Test our anchor coat. Study what to look for, and how to know our plaster is sturdy.
- Learn how many coats of plaster are needed for different wall types.
- Apply the second plaster coat (the body coat), and learn how to make it ready for the finishing plaster.

Afternoon

- Finishing plasters: Learn how best to mix very fine plasters to create beautiful, protective finishes.
- Normal trowels, and Japanese finishing trowels. When to use them, how to use them, and when not to bother.

- Sponging techniques. (Unknown to most: This is one of the most important techniques you will learn).
- Burnishing clay plaster.
- Understand when plaster or cob is 'leather hard' and how to work it in this state.
- Use cob to make a bottle window. Learn three different bottle wall techniques, and their pros and cons.

Monday 15th

Morning

- Learn how to sculpt clay plaster or cob, and create alcoves, shelving, benches, and even houses!
- Embedding tiles and mirrors into plaster.
- Maintaining and repairing both cob and clay plaster.
- Apply the final plaster coat and practice sponging, trowelling and burnishing.
- Clay and lime paints.

Afternoon

Choose one of the following (if we don't have time for both).

- Introduction to earthbag building.
- Choose your own mini cob or clay plaster project.

Monday evening, workshop ends.