

critical cyborg

discovering clay behavior

ISSUE DATE _9/7/18
DUE DATE _9/10/18 9am

BE ADVISED

You are charged with keeping your 25lb piece of green clay malleable for operations and transformations leading up to the all-studio project review on Friday September 21st. You will be working intensively with the clay as your model medium and it will need to be well wrapped in plastic to protect it from drying out. If you do not wrap it adequately and it does harden then you will need to retrieve it by working water into the paste and kneading it back to a flexible state. This is always possible but remember it is time consuming (could take 2hrs) and it is hard work.

Be attentive to the cleanliness of your work station. Clay should not migrate towards your drawing desks. Clean the area when you finish working with clay. Scrape off wet clay from the work table to prevent dry gritty pieces becoming entrained in the next person's work.

Do not block the drains, follow the bucket protocols to sediment the fines from your hands and tools. Remember that the whole studio relies on water being able to drain away.

Always keep your work and spare clay in bags marked with your name. You do not want some-one else's skin cells in your piece.

image credit
Google_land folds in Southern Algeria.

DELIVERABLES

Photograph five different re-forming processes, (record component pieces, assembly and manipulation results). Try to use different thinking for each experiment. Observe the tactile feedback. Upload five series of up to 10 images onto RTB.

The piece of clay is your instrument of discovery. Garick Tai-Lee will explain the principals of material structure and working with clay. He will introduce some methods of breaking it down. Clay has both a complicated chemistry and wide range of behaviors. This has had impact on landscape forms, flows of water and patterns of human and non-human life. Clay has had a central role in the history of construction. If the concerns of this studio are to challenge definitive forms then clay will become for us a metaphor for both the earth (MASS) and artifice (MESS).

In this first weekend with your piece of squidgy amorphous stuff you have a 25lb lump and a base board approx 15"x15" to build on. You are asked to make a series of deliberate assemblies from broken down pieces. These differing strategies will have an effect on the massing and manoevrability of the re-assembly. There are a number of methods you might use to break it down; wire cutting, tearing, rolling, pressing, wetting, extruding. The component shape and size, the re-assembly or erosion method will generate differing inner structures and so a variety shape shifting potentials. Your repeated process of breaking/reforming/manipulating/eroding should be photographed methodically. We will talk about your discoveries and your understanding in studio on Monday 9/10.

