



Ranch Clay

G26070211

with Barbara Campbell

July 12-18, 2026

Welcome to RANCH CLAY!

The art of making pottery has a long history that dates back to ancient times, and it has been an essential part of many cultures throughout history.

Pottery-making involves a creative process that requires skill, patience, and attention to detail. When making pottery, the potter uses their hands to shape the clay into a vessel, and each piece is unique, reflecting the potter's creativity and skill.

The spiritual connection that pottery invokes is related to the fact that pottery has often been used for ceremonial purposes in many cultures. For example, Native American tribes used pottery in their spiritual rituals, and the ancient Greeks used pottery in their religious ceremonies. Pottery has also been used to hold sacred objects, such as water or food, and as such, it has become imbued with a sense of reverence and respect.



In addition to its ceremonial use, pottery-making itself can be a meditative and spiritual practice. The act of creating something with one's hands can be a form of meditation, and the process of making pottery can be therapeutic and calming. The repetition of the movements involved in pottery-making can help to focus the mind and create a sense of inner peace.

Overall, the connection between the art of making pottery and the spiritual connection it invokes lies in the cultural and ceremonial significance of pottery, as well as the meditative and therapeutic qualities of the process itself. Pottery-making is a unique and ancient art form that has the power to connect us with our past and evoke a sense of awe and wonder in the present.

In our ceramic arts classes at the Ghost Ranch we will be focused on our spiritual connection with the earth both literally and figuratively. I always encourage my participants to create whatever comes to mind, heart or spirit. This means that our focus is not necessarily on the functional aspect of building with clay. I might be on decorative wall pieces, non functional sculptural yards or garden pieces. Certain kinds of clay work best as indoor object d'art and other types are perfect for outdoor display.

In this letter welcoming you to Ghost Ranch, I would like to extend a few pieces of information. Always bring layers as the weather here can be changeable at a moment's notice. I always encourage my students to bring cotton or linen long pants just in case of participation with the firing process. Long pants are also valuable for hiking and evenings. A pair of closed toed



shoes are always valuable for working around the firing process should we be doing that in your particular workshop, but they are also valuable for walking on the dusty paths around the ranch. A long sleeved cotton or natural fiber shirt is helpful in many cases as well. We have a few aprons in the studio that I keep clean and ready for use, but if you have a favorite, then please bring it along with any tools that you think you might need. The pottery studio is reasonably equipped with tools so it is not necessary to bring any unless you are truly partial to your own.

Feel free to contact me (bcampbell@valornet.com), if you have any questions or concerns about your upcoming stay at the ranch.

See you soon,
Barbara Campbell

Schedule:

July 12

Check in, Dinner in the Dining Hall 5:30 – 6:30.

Orientation at 7PM (please check your folder to determine the location).

July 13

Breakfast 7:30–8:30

Class starts at 9am each day at the new pottery building in Pot Hollow (check your map for directions)



Our first morning, July 13th we will wander around a bit on the ranch and find clay deposits and do a bit of clay harvesting. We will then go back to the classroom and process the clay. This operation should take most of the morning. We will get our processed clay onto plaster bats for drying during the lunch hour. When we return from lunch at 1PM we will further process our clay and begin our building process. I will be spending a few hours in the afternoon doing demos and having the class follow along.

We will have Monday - Wednesday 9-Noon and open studio in the afternoon and evening to build projects. There will be some time allotted to demos each day along with hands on work and personal help.

Thursday we will do slipping/burnishing and finish work on our pieces. We will preheat the pieces in the late afternoon or evening.

Friday morning we will do a modified pit firing (I say modified because we will be at the mercy of the weather).

Friday afternoon we will have a group critique and prepare for the Art Show. At around 4PM we will all go set up the show. dinner as usual and then the Art show happens right after dinner.

At the end of the Art Show we will pack up our pieces and meet back in Pot Hollow before the next evening event.