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## PRODUCT INFORMATION

### GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE USE OF CERAMIC COLOURS

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Underglazes, glaze stains and body stains are a source of colour in decorating ceramic work, colouring glazes and slips or clay bodies. We now refer to these products as colours or stains. The difference between an underglaze and a glaze or body stain is 10% of a product called underglaze flux is added to the underglaze. There is no difference between a glaze stain and a body stain, except some glaze stains will not colour a slip or clay body and produce the same colour that is produced in a glaze. In these instances these colours will only be called glaze stains. An example is crimson colours will often only produce pinks when used as a body stain.

When used as an underglaze the decoration can be applied to the greenware (dry clay) or bisque ware. A transparent glaze is then applied the pieces. Invariably colours are not "strong" enough to burn through an opaque glaze. When used with an opaque glaze the colours will normally be applied to the dry glaze surface. This technique is known as "majolica" or "maiolica"

For underglaze painting the colours should be prepared mixing 2 to 4 parts colour to 1 part of underglaze flux (by volume). Underglaze media is then added to produce a creamy consistency. The finished mix can be cautiously diluted with water for application. The mix of colour with media can be varied by testing for each individual purpose. When used in the majolica technique it will probably be found that a greater proportion of underglaze flux is required.

A coloured glaze can easily be produced by added colour to a transparent glaze. This is way that most coloured earthenware glazes are made. The amount of colour added will vary the strength and/or opacity of the glaze. The normal suggestion is adding between 5-8% of stain to the glaze. When colouring a decorating slip or engobe use between 8-18%.

Tests should always be used when using these products to ensure the desired result is achieved. One of the most common problems experienced with colours when using as underglazes is the glaze crawling back leaving the colour exposed and matt. This is due to the colour not having enough flux in it. The problem can be exaggerated by the colour being applied too thickly. Adding flux should greatly reduce the risk of this problem happening. When mixing the colour, a few drops of a transparent glaze that will be used for the covering glaze can be added instead of using the underglaze flux. The problem with this method is a drop will change in size depending on the brush used and the number of drops would also vary depending on the amount of colour to be mixed. Anything from 2 parts colour up to 4 parts colour to one of flux by visual volume should be the starting point to produce the desired result. Unfortunately the amount needed will vary from colour to colour. Colours containing prasydium, selenium, zircon will always need more flux then colours such as brown, mazarine blue etc.

The media is used to aid the flow of the colour from the brush, particularly good when banding lines etc. If no media is used the colour will tend to rush out of the brush producing a stroke that varies from solid opaque colour to a fading strength.