

# GROUNDING

Grounding is the technique of applying paint to the surface of the porcelain to achieve a solid colour.

To achieve a perfect ground certain steps must be followed. If unsure about how a colour grounds test fire it first. Some colours ground better than others. It is better to ground the area twice with a very light ground than try to ground heavy at first. Have everything prepared beforehand.

Below is my technique for grounding.

**Tools:** Soft Dusting Brush (MOP Brush), Synthetic Square shader to apply the oil – ½" – ¾" size is best, grounding oil, clean silk (pressed with no lines and doubled over), sponge, powder paint.

1. The piece of porcelain must be free of dust and marks. Clean with Methylated Spirits.
2. Using your Square Shader cover area quickly and evenly with grounding oil. A thin cover is best. A little paint could also be added to the oil first. This helps to see where the oil is applied and to alleviate missing any areas. It is important that the total area to be grounded is covered with oil. If a section is missed, you will not see it until after the paint has been dusted on. This section cannot be "patched". The paint will have to be wiped off and the process repeated.
3. Wrap silk, doubled over, around a large piece of sponge. Pounce until the oil has been evenly and thinly distributed. The silk soaks up the oil and it is necessary to keep changing the silk around the piece of sponge. I sponge until the silk appears dry and is no longer soaking up any oil. It is important that the oil is spread evenly and no wet areas left. If wet areas are left your ground will be ruined.
4. Cover the vial of paint with a piece of stocking and secure with a rubber band. The stocking sifts the powder as it is sprinkled on.
5. Lightly sprinkle the powder all over the piece. Place some additional paint in one area and using the dusting brush in a circular motion; very gently work over the area. The bristles of the brush must not touch the oil. Always keep the powder paint between the brush and the oil.
6. The grounded area will now have the look of suede. Very gently brush off any excess powder and clean up the edges. Always check the back of your piece and clean up any powder residue. If the grounded area is scratched during this process, it cannot be patched successfully.
7. Wash brush well in Gum Turps. If the oil is not washed out well, the brush will go hard.
8. Fire – 800-900 depending on the colour. Do not fire reds higher than 800 as they have a tendency to fire brown.

## **PROBLEMS WHICH CAN OCCUR.**

PATCHY APPLICATION: Most probably a very light application of oil. Apply another coat and fire again. It could also be the colour used as some colours do not ground very well. Apply again and fire.

PEELING PAINT AFTER FIRING: Maybe too heavy an application of oil and it was not padded back enough. See 3 above. Do not use an old oil that has gone thick. This can be used for other purposes but not for grounding – it will be too thick and gluggy to pad back.

SPOTS ON THE GROUNDING: Possibly some of the powder had not been brushed off before firing.