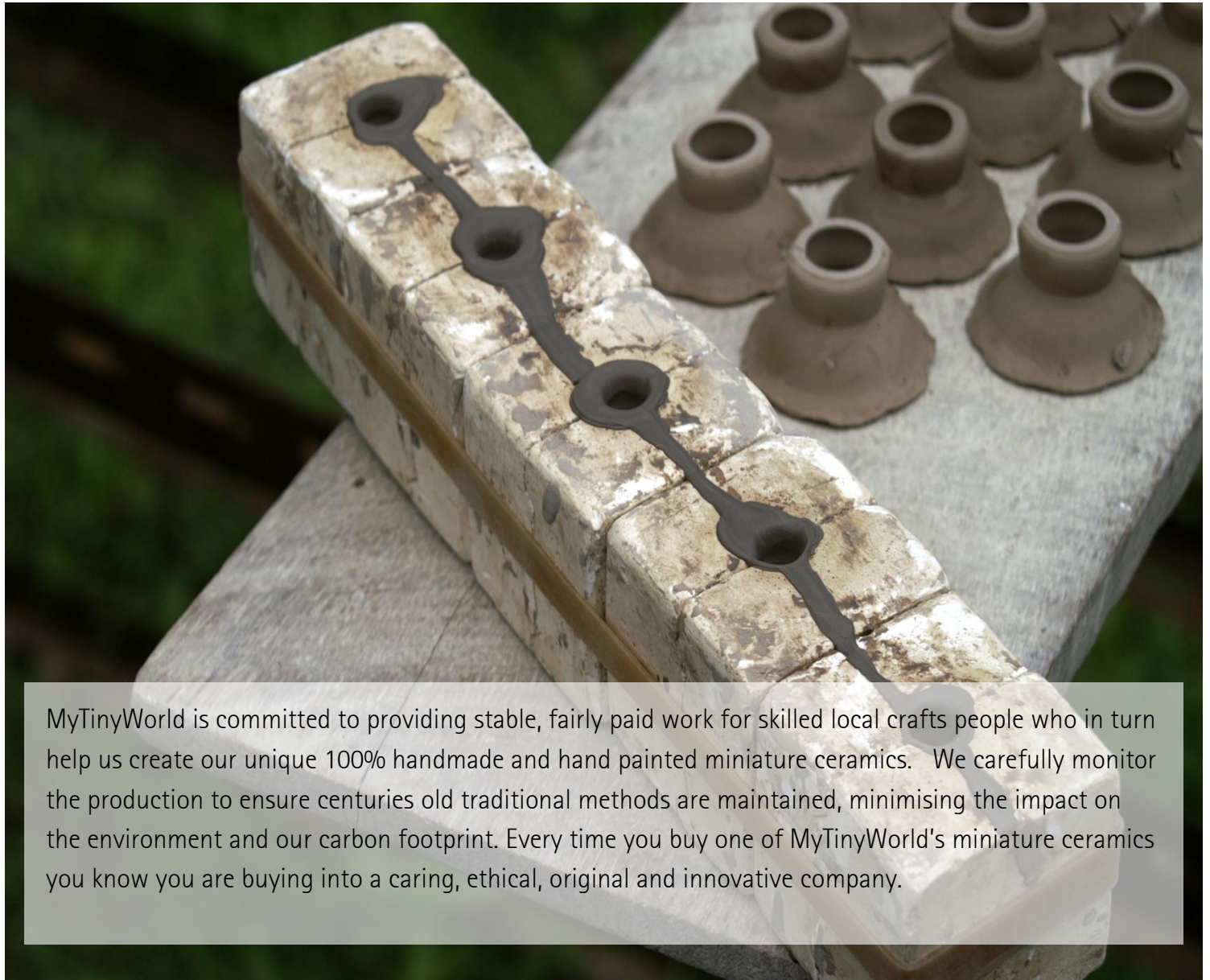


MYTINYWORLD HANDMADE CERAMICS

PRODUCT MANUFACTURING INFORMATION SHEET



MyTinyWorld is committed to providing stable, fairly paid work for skilled local crafts people who in turn help us create our unique 100% handmade and hand painted miniature ceramics. We carefully monitor the production to ensure centuries old traditional methods are maintained, minimising the impact on the environment and our carbon footprint. Every time you buy one of MyTinyWorld's miniature ceramics you know you are buying into a caring, ethical, original and innovative company.

Stage One - Preparation



LAMPANG WHITE CLAY

This high quality white clay known as Kaolinite comes from the Lampang region of Thailand. Its collection and processing provides fairly paid work to many people from the surrounding villages.

This clay has a number of interesting properties, the most notable being its resistance to high levels of heat resulting in ceramic products of very high quality with fine characteristics.



CHIANG MAI WATER

Our production facility is based in Chiang Mai and is run by a local lady and her son. They employ other locals from the hill tribes, providing well paid regular work.

The Kaolinite needs to be mixed with water, and it is essential that the water is totally free of debris. The water is filtered three times before being stored in large containers, ready for the mixing process.



KAOLINITE SLIP

All of our ceramic products are made using the clay casting technique. This requires liquid clay, also known as slip.

To create this slip, large chunks of Kaolinite are thrown into the blue plastic mixing barrel with the filtered water.

It is critical the correct amount of water to clay mix is used and can take many years to learn the secrets of getting it just right.



KAOLINITE SLIP SOUP

The Kaolinite and filtered water are mixed for an hour or so to get a good consistency before being transferred to their final holding tank.

As with a lot of things in life, Kaolinite slip improves with age. The longer it is left, the smoother and "creamier" the slip soup gets, to the point when it is at its absolute finest and perfect for casting.

Now we're ready to make miniatures!



PLASTER CASTING MOLDS

Depending on how many pieces are needed, the two-part plaster molds are laid out and prepared, ensuring they are clean, dry and free from defects.

It is critical that the plaster mold be dry. The success of the final casting relies heavily on this factor as the water is absorbed from the slip, causing it to solidify.



FILLING THE MOLDS

Small containers are filled with the prepared slip and then each of the prepared plaster molds is filled to the top and left for 30 minutes.

The plaster mold begins to draw the water from the slip. The longer this process is left, the thicker the walls of the ceramic item. When at the desired thickness, excess slip is poured from the molds.



SLOWLY DOES IT

Once the excess slip has been removed, the molds are left for an hour, preferably in the sun to allow further drying of the clay casting.

When the casting is ready, the mold is carefully opened. The casting will have shrunk slightly in this initial drying period, making it easy to remove from the mold.



WE SAID SLOWLY!

There are a number of factors that can lead to a poor result, as shown in the picture. A dirty or wet mold, poor slip preparation, rushing the filling and initial cast forming stage or just impatience to look inside a mold can ruin a piece. It takes a lot to get one of our ceramics to this point.

Our ceramics have only just begun their journey.

Stage Two - Processing



BREAKING THE MOLD

Once the filled molds have sat in the sun for an hour or so, they are brought in and the holding band that keeps both halves of the mold together is removed.

Very carefully, the mold is opened to expose the semi-hard clay casting inside.

It is then left for another hour to harden more.



MOLD REMOVAL

The clay casting has now had a chance to breathe and harden enough to allow the careful removal from the remaining half of the mold. Generally, when done with care, the loss rate is less than 0.5%

At this point the colour of the clay castings is dark grey, indicating a high water content (around 33%).



DRYING OUT

The clay castings are spread out on pieces of wood and placed on racking to dry. Very little energy other than nature's own is used in this stage. This process can take up to two days depending on the weather. The clay castings slowly change colour from dark grey through light grey, brown and finally off white.

Water content is now near 10%



OPERATION CLEANUP

This process actually takes place 24 hours into the drying period, so the clay is not too hard, but also not so soft that it will cave in with handling.

A skilled worker carefully uses a knife to remove the seams at the joints and tidy up lips and handles.

The piece is then gently rubbed down to ensure it is as near perfect as we can achieve.



PRE PAINT PREPARATION

The ceramics are now sent for their first firing, called "bisque". This firing is not as hot as the final one and is designed to harden the ceramics so they can be handled.

A final quality check for faults, missed waste clay or defects is carried out by a skilled worker. Once the ceramic has passed this quality check, it's passed to the painters.



PAINTING BY NUMBERS

Our skilled painters take many years of practice to be able to paint our ceramics with such skill, speed and accuracy.

The most common pattern we paint is the cockerel motif. In Far Eastern culture it is embedded in the social lore. The cockerel is a highly revered image that appears on pretty much everything.



A VERY BLUE DAY

Just as the Cockerel is our most popular scene, blue is far and above the most popular colour.

Most of our patterns are in blue – Blue Spotted, Blue Leaf, and our new aqua blue range,

When initially applied, the paints – especially the blue – look very pale and many a beginner is seen to be looking quite panicky!



GLOSS OVER IT ALL

Anyone who has bought any ceramics from our range of over 800 will note that the high quality and beautiful detail is complemented by a fantastic glossy finish.

This is the stage where we give the ceramics that gloss, by dipping them in liquid glaze prior to firing. The glaze not only gives the ceramics a nice finish, it strengthens the structure and brings out the colour.

Stage Three - Firing

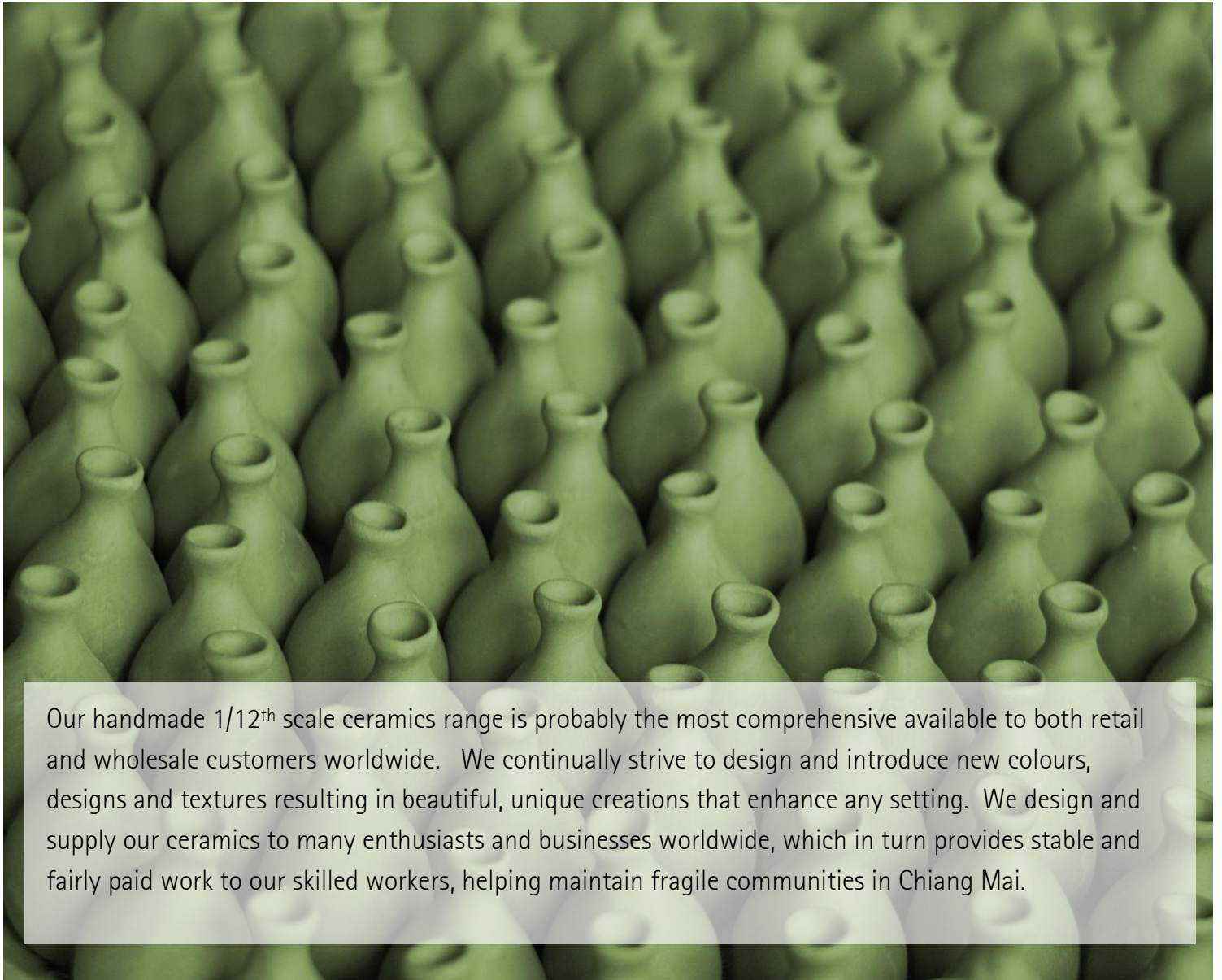


The final stage, where all the hard work pays off – and the end of the story for the creation of that little handmade, hand painted miniature ceramic!

All the ceramics that need firing are placed on shelves separated with firebricks. Once the columns are complete, they are wheeled into the Kiln. Depending on whether this is the bisque firing (pre glazing) or the final firing the temperature will be between 1845° and 2250° F. The glaze fuses to the ceramic during firing to form a glass-like coating.

MYTINYWORLD HANDMADE CERAMICS

PRODUCT COLOUR AND TYPE INFORMATION



Our handmade 1/12th scale ceramics range is probably the most comprehensive available to both retail and wholesale customers worldwide. We continually strive to design and introduce new colours, designs and textures resulting in beautiful, unique creations that enhance any setting. We design and supply our ceramics to many enthusiasts and businesses worldwide, which in turn provides stable and fairly paid work to our skilled workers, helping maintain fragile communities in Chiang Mai.

Product Colours & Designs



Aquamarine Blue



Hot Pink



White & Blue Rim



Sea Green



Bamboo Pattern



Salmon



Cockerel Motif



Hint of Pink



Green Spotted

Product Colours & Designs



Spanish Yellow



Stoneware



Metallic Brown



White



Flowery Rimmed



Blue Spotted



Aquamarine Blue Serving Set



Hint of Pink Cup Set



MyTinyWorld – Where quality ceramics don't cost the Earth

Photography: Paul Duckett

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