“CLAY” BODY EXPLORATIONS

Essential questions for discovering alternative materials to create!

Traits of Clay and Materials:

Plasticity!

- **Plasticity:** Created by impurities and bacteria in clay, this quality allows a material to be rolled or stretched without cracking or breaking. The opposite of plasticity is a material being "short".
    - If your sculpting material cracks or comes apart, consider adding moisture- water, oil, glue, etc. Clay is sometimes aged because the growth of bacteria helps with plasticity.
    - Does it help to work your material? Some materials need to be "conditioned" like Sculpy by kneading. Other materials dry out or get overworked from too much handling.

Tooth!

- **Tooth:** This refers to the amount of rough texture particles in a body. Tooth is created by adding grog, sand or other materials and increases the raw strength and resistance to thermal shock the clay possesses. It can also be a desirable trait for surface appearance.
    - What materials do you have at home to add tooth? Consider sand, rice, fine gravel, small beads, crushed nuts, etc. Do you prefer your "clay" to remain smooth or rough?
    - How does adding tooth change the workability of your material? Is it easier to sculpt with or does it make it more difficult to use?

Maturity!

- **Maturity:** The temperature at which clay reaches it's optimum strength and appearance. With clay this involves heating it in a kiln and might be a low temperature or high temperature.
    - Consider for your "clay"- does it need to be heated up to harden or just air dried? How long does it take to dry/ harden completely? Does your material even dry out or does it stay soft?
    - Some materials actually have a chemical reaction occur such as with epoxy or plaster and the material has an amount of time it is "open" before changing physical properties.

Vitreous!

- **Vitreous:** When clay is vitreous it has very low porosity or water absorption and is very hard or almost glass-like. For our studies we will consider this aspect in tests for how "strong" or permanent the material is after "maturing".
    - After your clay has dried or matured, do some tests to determine its strength. Does it crumble easily and remain fragile? How much effort does it take to break off a piece?
    - Can you rewet the material and turn it back into workable clay? Does water or another liquid cause it to dissolve or come apart? How permanent do you think your "clay" is?