

AQC0485

# Nanopublication — Material and Technical Execution

by Arnaud Quercy · The alchemist · 2023



TECHNICAL METHODOLOGY FIRST PERSON EMBODIED

PRACTICE CERAMIC TECHNIQUE HIGH

## Material and Technical Execution

I use terre de petite chamotte (fine-grog earthenware) fired at approximately 980°C for the [1] central figure and geometric forms, with metal rods inserted after firing to support the suspended elemental forms, then finish with beeswax to create an organic, tactile surface contrasting with the geometric symbols.

### CONTEXT

The technical realization of this piece separates the ceramic work from the metal armature assembly. I use terre de petite chamotte (fine-grog earthenware) for the central figure and geometric forms, chosen for its workability in modeling the complex facial treatment and its structural integrity after firing.

The piece is fired to approximately 980°C—a mid-range earthenware temperature that fully hardens the clay while preserving the warm earth tones characteristic of chamotte clay. At this temperature, the petite chamotte achieves sufficient strength for the sculptural forms while remaining porous enough to accept the beeswax finish effectively.

The metal rods are inserted after firing, which avoids thermal expansion complications but creates a different engineering challenge: securely anchoring thin metal supports into fired ceramic without visible mechanical fasteners while supporting the weight of

the suspended geometric elements. This requires precise planning during the clay modeling phase—creating sockets or attachment points that will accept the rods after the ceramic has vitrified.

The post-firing assembly allows for adjustable positioning of the elemental forms, creating the specific orbital relationships around the central figure. Each rod must be independently stable while contributing to the overall structural balance of the piece.

After assembly, I apply cire d'abeille (beeswax) to the ceramic surfaces. This traditional finish creates a warm, organic tactility that contrasts sharply with the geometric precision of the suspended elements. The beeswax slightly darkens the petite chamotte's natural earth tones, emphasizing the figure's groundedness while the metal rods and polished geometric forms catch light more sharply.

This material contrast reinforces the conceptual program: the earthy, wax-finished figure (the embodied alchemist, bound to physical matter) versus the clean geometric forms (the pure, Platonic elements the alchemist contemplates).

### REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2023). The alchemist — Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0485.html>  
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0485.html>
- [2] - \*\*Author:\*\* Arnaud Quercy
- [3] - \*\*Artwork Reference:\*\* AQC0485 / The alchemist
- [4] Earthenware firing ranges: 900-1100°C, distinguished from stoneware (1200-1280°C) and porcelain (1280-1400°C). Mid-range earthenware at ~980°C provides structural integrity while maintaining porosity for surface treatments.
- [5] Post-firing assembly techniques in sculptural ceramics, allowing complex multi-element compositions without thermal stress complications.
- [6] Beeswax finishing on earthenware: the porous nature of earthenware clay (vs. vitrified stoneware) allows deeper penetration of wax, creating richer surface effects.
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