



a natural state

Artist: Stephen Ferrell

Video 2: Process A. Making Clay

(Music plays in background.) Clay comes from the rotting down or weathering of our rocks. And it depends upon the type of rock. This is feldspar. The pink that we see in the granite part of this is quartz, and this becomes the sand. The feldspar breaking down really becomes the purest clay in the world.

(Stephen takes a flat piece of metal and smashes small clumps of feldspar to make them into manageable pieces.) This, I use today to kind of pulverize it. Now all of our clays are things that have to be washed. And in Louis Mile's desk records was actually a machine for slipping clay. This is called taking it to the condition of being liquefied for filtering.

(The potter is shown stirring a mixture in a white plastic bucket.) This is my simplified method of washing clay. Potters call this blunging. (Stephen pours the stirred liquid through a sieve and into another bucket. He uses a paint brush to push the softened slip through the strainer.) Here we are filtering out large pieces of sand or rocks; lumps of clay that may not have fully melted here. And what we want to do is pour this on through. This will sit and as it sits in the bucket here, the clay will fall out of it and the water will rise to the top. And every day, I would just pour off the water from that until we get to a condition where the clay is like this. (Stephen moves to another bucket and holds up a rather muddy looking clump of material.)

(Stephen breaks the clump into sections.) This is something that we can take to the next process of putting it through the pug mill.