

# MY EXPERIENCE ABOUT PAPER KILNS SINCE 2007

Mutlu Baskaya (Turkey)



Picture 1: 1<sup>st</sup> Poster of paper kiln workshop, 2007



Picture 2: One year later-poster of paper kiln workshop exhibition, 2008

I have constructed my experimental paper kilns in Turkey and in abroad since 2007. My paper kilns are designed in the logic of wood firing kilns with a firebox below stoked by wood. And at first wire net is covered with paper clay and then with newspaper dipped in clay. These are my kiln's features. Other artists do not stoke the fire like wood firing kilns and they do not use the paper clay while they are constructing their kilns. So after firing, their kilns are collapsed.

I learned paper kiln technique for the first time in 1994 at the paper kiln workshop held under the leadership of Yugoslavian artist BIZJAK ZVONKO in GIOELA SUARDI's studio in Italy but that kiln had been constructed by a different technique and had been smaller than mine.

My 1st paper kiln workshop was held on the occasion of 40th anniversary of Hacettepe University and 25th anniversary of Faculty of Fine Arts on 19 May 2007 at H.U. Beytepe Campus under the leadership of me with the attendance of 100 people from academic staff and students of Ceramics, Sculpture, Paintings, Interior Design and Graphics Design Departments of Hacettepe and 9 Universities (Picture 1,2,3,4).

I did many paper kiln workshops in Turkey and abroad. Countries where I constructed my paper kilns were Turkey, India, Thailand. I used many kind of clay to mix with paper pulp. For example in Turkey I always use local clay to construct paper kiln from Klnlk, pottery village even though I do workshop every time in different place in Turkey. This clay has yellow iron and after firing it turns into terracotta color.

In India I used local clay in Baroda and its color turned into from red to terracotta color. Clay had red iron oxide.

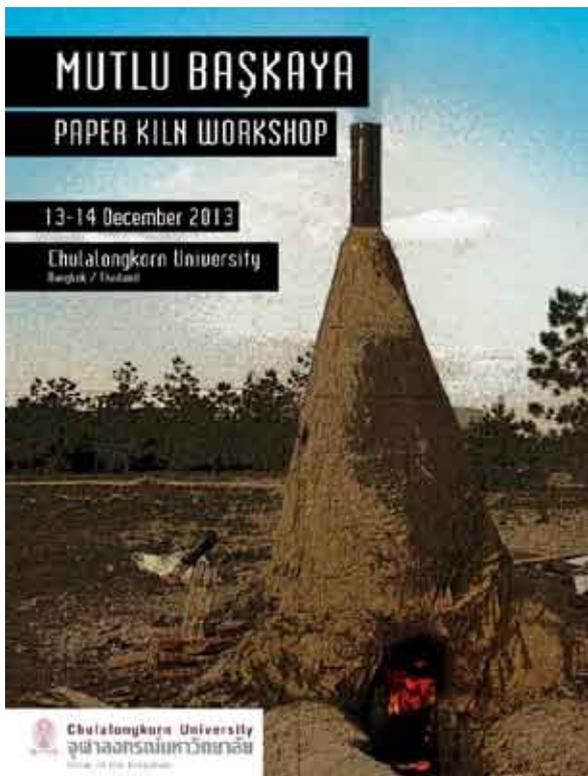
In Thailand I constructed paper kilns 3 times and I used different local clay for constructing the kiln in Bangkok. 1st workshop was Silpakorn University's event in Hua Hin Beach and after firing clay, color turned into from dark brown to light brown. 2nd workshop was at Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Fine and Applied Art and before firing and after firing clay color was same as like 1st local clay. But my 3rd workshop in Bangkok was in Industrial Department of Chulalongkorn University. And I used high temperature local clay from Bangkok. Its color turned into from dark black into the white color.

Firing object in the paper kiln was secondary purpose for me but nowadays I also started to enjoy from the result of firing. While constructing new kilns I am learning something new in each experience. Every time firing result is being improved. Since each of the participants use different kind of clay and material in their objects we observe diversity on the surface of ceramics after firing.



Picture 3,4 : My 1st paper kiln workshop at Hacettepe University, 2007. Two days later, after firing .we cut the kiln wire to unload the kilns.

**My 9th workshop was at the Chulalongkorn University, Department of Creative Arts, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in Thailand.**



Picture 5: Poster of 9th Paper Kiln Workshop at Chulalongkorn University.



Picture 6: Picture from firing at night.

The purpose of my workshop is building a kiln collectively and viewing the visual effect of the union of kiln–fire through the night and enjoy it beside firing the clay. The visual effect created by the kilns was a result of the firing taking approximately 12 hours left unforgettable impressions in the memories of students, overtaking the usage function of the kilns. Two academic staffs, students from Chulalongkorn University and an academic staff from other institution and his students participated to the workshop.

We started to workshop with my presentation at 9:30 on 13 December 2014.

While I was presenting “the video film of my 1st Hacettepe University– Paper Kiln Workshop” at Chulalongkorn University on 13th of December 2013 (Picture 7).



Picture 7: Workshop started with my presentation.



Picture 8: Picture from preparation of ceramics for workshop.

Preparation process of ceramics for Paper Kiln at Department of Decorative Arts at Chulalongkorn University (picture 8).

Cotton fabric are cut and dipped into the metal salts and then ceramics are wrapped with them. I learned this technique from Mr. M. Tuzum Kizilcan in 2003 while he was presenting his works about saggar at my department in Ankara. But first time I had learned saggar technique in Italy from Gioela Suardi in 2000. I had tried to wrap dishwasher wire to my ceramic panels at her studio using her saggar container. And i did first saggar container at the meeting of Turkish-Greek Workshop at Eczacibasi Art Studio in 2000, Istanbul. At this workshop Maro Kerassioti taught me materials giving attractive effects on the ceramic surface. For example some organics like dry orange peel and horse droppings. Almost during the symposium at Eczacibasi Art Gallery I spent all of my time making up the saggar container. Other Greek artist Perikles Kontoninas said me instead of making saggar container it would be better to use aluminum foil as a saggar container. And then I started to use aluminum saggar foil in paper kilns.



Picture 9: Ceramics wrapped with cotton fabric dipped into metal salts and dishwasher wires.



Picture 10: Mixture of pulp and clay.



Picture 11: While I was teaching to students to prepare paperclay.

Covering of wire net with paper clay slab is the most distinguishing feature of my paper kilns. First wire net is covered by paper clay slab and then it is covered by 25 layers of newspaper dipped into clay.



Picture 12: Preparation of paper clay slabs.



Picture 13,14: Ceramics with aluminum folio saggar or without aluminum folio saggar on the fire box for paper kiln firing.

Some pieces are wrapped with aluminum folio like ceramic saggar container. Technical process of aluminum saggar is same as saggar process but instead of resistant saggar box I use aluminum folio.



Picture15: Covering of wire net with paper clay slab.



Picture 16: Covering of paper clay slab with newspaper dipped into the slip clay.

Students created a smooth surface covered with clay slip, terra sigillata, which adapts particularly well to the paper kiln technique. This slip covering may be burnished to achieve a gloss. Prepared ceramics were nestled into paper kiln or aluminum folio saggar filled with beds of combustible materials, such as sawdust, charcoal, less combustible organic materials, salts, metal salts and metals. These materials ignite or fume during firing, leaving the pot buried in layers of fine ash. Ceramics in filled paper kilns may display impressive markings, with colors ranging from distinctive black and white markings to flashes of gold, green and red tones. Porcelain and stoneware are ideal for displaying the surface patterns obtained through paper kiln firing or saggar firing.



Picture 17: We have just started the fire.



Picture 18: After firing - one day later with my 3 colleagues and students with 2 paper kilns.



I exhibited student ceramics and paper kiln in my solo exhibition at Chulalongkom University Museum in Thailand on 23th of December 2013.