

Week 3 – Glossary of Terms: Application Techniques & Surface Finishes

| Term | Definition |
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| Base Coat | The initial layer of plaster applied to the wall, designed to even out the surface and provide a stable foundation for additional coats. |
| Finish Coat | The final, visible layer of plaster that determines the texture, color, and appearance of the surface. |
| Trowel | A flat-bladed hand tool used to apply, smooth, and shape plaster on the wall. Comes in different sizes for different tasks. |
| Hawk | A handheld platform used to hold plaster while it's being applied with a trowel. |
| Float | A tool (often wooden or sponge-faced) used to smooth or texture plaster, particularly helpful in the finishing stages. |
| Burnishing | The process of compressing the surface of the final coat of plaster to create a smoother, sometimes shiny finish, usually with a metal trowel. |
| Sponge Float | A float with a sponge face used to soften the plaster surface or to blend joints and create texture. |
| Setting Time | The period it takes for plaster to begin hardening after application. Can vary based on thickness, temperature, and mix components. |
| Open Time | The time during which plaster remains workable before it begins to set. Critical for multi-layered or decorative finishes. |
| Skim Coat | A very thin application of plaster (1–3 mm) meant to smooth or refine an existing surface. |
| Scratch Coat | A rough first coat scored with a tool to help subsequent layers bond better. |
| Keying | The act of creating mechanical texture in a plaster layer (such as with a comb or wire brush) to aid adhesion of the next coat. |

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| Layering | Building up multiple coats of plaster in succession, allowing partial or complete drying between layers. |
| Pigment Wash | A diluted mix of pigment and water or binder applied to dry plaster for added color depth and variation. |
| Texture Finish | A decorative technique that intentionally leaves the surface rough, patterned, or uneven to enhance visual interest or material feel. |
| Velatura | A thin, semi-transparent tinted plaster wash used to tone a surface and create visual depth. |
| Scagliola | A traditional Italian plaster technique using pigmented plaster to imitate marble or stone. |
| Crack Bridging | A plaster system's ability to span or mask small substrate cracks without breaking or detaching. |
| Plaster Bloom | A subtle mottling or clouding effect that can occur naturally in some finishes as they cure, often desirable in decorative applications. |
| Feathering | The process of blending plaster edges into surrounding areas to create a seamless transition between layers or patches. |
| Slip Coat | A preliminary, thin liquid coat of plaster or binder used to help adhesion before the main coat is applied. |
| Seam Blending | The technique of smoothing over joints or transitions in plaster to ensure a uniform finish without visible lines. |
| Tadelakt (Referenced) | A Moroccan waterproof lime plaster technique often burnished with soap. Mentioned as reference for burnishing effects and finishes. |
| Knife Marks | Intentional or accidental lines left by the plastering tool—often embraced as part of a natural, hand-applied aesthetic |
| Pull Time | The moment in the setting process when the plaster starts to stiffen—ideal for certain finish techniques like compression or pigment wash. |

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| Substrate | The surface on which plaster is applied (e.g., brick, wood, gypsum board, or clay board). It must be properly prepared to receive plaster. |
| Working Edge | The section of fresh plaster being actively worked during application. Keeping a clean, wet edge is important for seamless results. |
| Compression | The action of pressing or compacting plaster during the setting phase to densify the surface and bring out sheen or pattern. |