

STUDIO POTTERY LONDON

COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

SHORT COURSE - 5 weeks

The aim of this course is to ground students in the challenging and rewarding skills of centring and throwing simple vessels in clay on the wheel.

By the end of the course students should have finished and glazed a small, selected collection of cylinders, mugs and bowls.

Students can choose from a selected range of our studio glazes and the pots will be fired for later collection.

Students will be given a notebook and are encouraged to make notes and sketches each class. A date stamp will assist the teacher in monitoring their progress.

1. MASTERING THE PROCESS: CENTRING & THROWING A CYLINDER

Students will start by preparing the clay through wedging, removing air bubbles and making same-weight balls of clay.

CENTRING is a crucial skill. This involves using the momentum of the wheel and balanced pressure in the hands of the student to centre the ball of clay. This is a challenge, but a rewarding one. The student learns how to coordinate body and wheel, learning basic physical principles, as well as activating core strength and determination.

Having centred their ball of clay, the student will learn the skill of THROWING: pulling up clay in the walls to shape a simple vertical-sided cylinder. This is the primary form from which so many other forms are derived.

PROCESS will be the initial focus during Week One with cylinders being cross-sectioned with a wire to observe the thickness of walls and the progress being made in the pulling up of the walls. Sentimentality over 'my first pot' will be replaced by wonder and pride in seeing progress in mastery of the process. Pots will be recycled.

2. CYLINDERS. Continued work on basic cylinder throwing. The first few pots may be sliced through, but the goal is to produce a few successful cylinders to keep. These will be wrapped & kept damp for the next session.
3. TURNING. Leather-hard cylinders will be worked on, upside down, by trimming and turning, to reduce the weight of the piece and refine its shape. Some cylinders will be selected and finished. Others through the making and connection of handles will be transformed into mugs. These pieces will be signed and kept for bisque firing.
4. BOWLS. This week is the last chance before firing to make pieces which do not need any turning - basic bowls without foot rings. The bowl is an open form and flows on from the closed form of the cylinder. Students discover the particular techniques for creating a pleasing curve inside the vessel, how to lift the walls in a curvaceous way! They learn to partially dry their bowls on the wheel using a heat gun. All work will be bisque fired before the last lesson of this course.
5. GLAZING. Putting the finishing touches to a bisque fired pot with glaze. Now is the time to learn about firings and kilns. How to wax bases and dip vessels into glaze buckets. Pray to the kiln gods for a successful firing!

