

## SHORT COURSE DETAILS

WE6540 INTRICATE SURFACES – COLOUR AND TEXTURE WITH KILN-FORMED GLASS

Tutor: ALEX POWELL

Dates: WEEKEND FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER – SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER

### ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

This weekend course introduces beginners to the exciting possibilities of 'warm glass' – using fusing and slumping techniques to form glass in the kiln. With a focus on colour and texture, you will be fusing glass on a small scale (up to 25cm square), making use of decorative elements such as frits, stringers and metal inclusions. You will learn how to create different textural effects in the glass through fusing at different levels in the kiln. You will also be introduced to slumping which can give glass its form. You will be experimenting with slumping into impressions in loose plaster to create low-level relief in the glass surface, and you will have access to some simple commercial moulds to slump the glass into a three dimensional curve.

The fundamental technique you learn on the course is glass cutting. For those with little or no experience of glass, you use glass scoring and breaking tools to cut straight lines, gentle curves, circles and strips. Those that already know how to cut glass may pick up tips to develop a better technique.

A large selection of materials is then provided for you to work with, which includes glass sheet, powdered glass frit, stringers and noodles, and metal inclusions such as copper sheet, mesh and wire. You work towards one or two main glass pieces and you have an allotted space in three kiln firings in which to make the glass elements for your projects. Teaching is a combination of methods: showing a wide range of samples to illustrate possibilities, demonstrations of techniques and group evaluation of the glass coming out of the kiln.

During the weekend, you become acquainted with the glass kiln, understanding what happens to glass in the kiln during a firing cycle, learning about glass compatibility and how to load and unload a kiln. You learn how to fuse or slump at different levels inside the kiln to achieve different effects in the glass. Technical information is available in handouts which cover kiln processes and chart the firing cycle for simple kiln-forming.

By the end of the weekend you will have created a range of small glass tiles as samples, and used a selection of these to make one or two colourful panels in fused glass. These panels could be designed to hang at a window or they can be slumped to make a shallow bowl. You will have learnt how to use a range of tools and equipment correctly and you will be confident in handling glass. You will have acquired new skills in cutting and assembling glass for making durable kiln-formed glass pieces and you will know whether you want to develop your ideas in glass with further study.

#### First evening

8–9pm Introduction.  
Showing samples: levels of fusing, inclusions and frits.  
Experimentation, assembling glass for fused samples.  
Making impressions in loose plaster.

After a brief introduction showing glass samples, you get immediately involved. The first evening session is a freeform exploration of possibilities. You have access to pre-cut pieces of glass in all colours, various objects with which to make impressions and textures in loose plaster, and a range of glass products to play with. The emphasis of this session is to try things out.

**Please note:** although the class officially runs for an hour, it would be advisable to work on later (until 10pm) in order to have sufficient time to make the first batch of glass nuggets.

## Day 1

9–10.30am Laptop slideshow of images of previous students' work.  
Induction into safe working practices in the studio.  
Demonstration: simple glass cutting – breaking with running pliers.

The session starts with an informal look at pictures of glasswork from previous courses to inspire and illustrate the possibilities of the course.

After a short induction into health and safety, the tutor demonstrates glass cutting, and you learn how to use a glass cutter to score and tap glass and how to break glass along straight lines with running pliers or by hand. You can then practise cutting simple shapes from plain float glass.

11–12.30pm Demonstration: cutting gentle curves and circles.  
Demonstration: using grozing pliers – grozing and nibbling.  
Unloading the kiln – group review.

The tutor demonstrates how to use the glass cutter to tap out simple curves in glass, how to use the circle cutter and how to use the grozing pliers to clean up the edge of the glass by grozing and nibbling. You can put these new skills into practice straight away on fusing glass.

By this time the kiln should be cool enough to open, so you look at the glass nuggets made in the previous evening session. The lunch break gives you time to absorb what you have seen and start thinking about designs for a panel.

2–3.30pm Cutting and assembling glass for the first project.  
Showing samples: choosing glass and combining colours.  
Demonstration: use of frits

The afternoon is an intensive session of individual work to cut and assemble the glass pieces for the first project. You are shown colour samples in fused glass over a lightbox to allow you to make informed decisions when choosing colours to work with. You are shown ways of attaching fittings for hanging panels. You will also be shown how to use powdered glass frits to create texture and colour both within the glass and on its surface.

4–5.30pm Demonstration: use of stringers and noodles – using heat to bend.  
Demonstration: using fibre paper to create relief in the glass.  
Loading the kiln – using layers to obtain different levels of fusing.

The last session includes demonstrations of how to add other decorative detail into the glass. You are introduced to stringers and noodles and shown how to bend and manipulate them over the flame of a candle to create decorative elements. The tutor also demonstrates the use of thick fibre paper to create shapes in relief in the glass.

Finally the tutor explains how to load the kiln, building the shelves up at different levels to achieve different results.

## Day 2

9–10.30am Talk: – the firing cycle.  
– compatibility of glass.

In the morning the tutor goes through the more technical aspects of glass fusing and slumping and what happens to the glass during the firing cycle, giving you handouts for reference. One can do simple fusing and slumping without knowing the finer details of the kiln process, however this information gives you a good base knowledge if you choose to follow through with any further courses in glass fusing and slumping. You begin to work on your second project.

11–12.30pm Unloading the kiln – group review.  
Cutting and assembling glass for the second project.  
Demonstration: the glass grinder / diamond pads for finishing.

The group opens the kiln and looks at the glass from the previous day's work. If any glass needs some simple coldworking, the tutor will demonstrate the use of the glass grinder to abrade larger areas of glass as well as the diamond pads to finish the edges. The rest of the morning is an intensive making session, bringing together all knowledge and skills acquired over the weekend to create a second project.

2–3.30pm      Cutting and assembling glass for the second project.  
Loading the kiln – using shelves to exploit the temperature differential.

For those wanting to slump their glass into a mould to make a bowl, the tutor explains how to use the kiln shelves to create fusing and slumping temperatures in the same firing. By 3 o'clock the kiln is loaded with all work in place. Students' work from this final firing will not be ready until the following day.

**Students need to make their own arrangements for collecting their work.**

**LEVEL: BEGINNERS**

Starting points. For those with little or no experience who want to go back to basics and would like a structured introduction to a subject.

**Is there anything a potential student needs to be able to do to succeed in the above?**

It is essential that you are able to stand for long periods of time as this course will involve being on your feet for much of the working time.

**ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:**

Alex Powell (artist name Alex R) studied History of Art at the Courtauld Institute and Glass at Central Saint Martins. She takes commissions for architectural pieces and sells through exhibitions.

**TIMETABLE:**

**Arrival day: Friday 28 October**

From 4.00pm	Arrival for residential students
6.45pm	Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm – 9.00pm	First teaching session – <b>attendance is an essential part of the course.</b> Please see detailed timetable on page 1 (as mentioned on page 1 although the class officially runs for an hour, it would be advisable to work on later).

**Other days: Saturday 29 October**

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.30pm	Tea
4.00pm	Afternoon classes continue
5.00pm	Classes finish
From 6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Evening working: we can work later into the evening if necessary. Optional evening slideshow – in which I talk about my work.

**Departure day: Sunday 30 October**

(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.00pm	Classes finish
3.30pm	Tea then departure

### **REQUIRED PREPARATION:**

The tutor brings a selection of items to make impressions into loose plaster, but you could also bring your own objects if you wish to experiment. Appropriate objects would need to be fairly small (the impressionable area being no larger than 8cm square) with a simple texture or relief surface. Examples could include: a flower head (particularly with defined petals, i.e. a daisy), a fork, a piece of bubble wrap, a wooden stamp with an interesting pattern, a leaf with defined veins, etc.

### **MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:**

We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.

For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

**Included in the course fee for this course:** the cost of 2kg of glass, glass products and inclusions, kiln paper and plaster, and is in addition to any items you may purchase individually. This course is based around the use of Spectrum System 96 glass.

**PLEASE NOTE – PIECES FROM THE LAST FIRING WILL NEED TO BE COLLECTED FROM THE COLLEGE AFTER THE FOLLOWING MORNING. THEY ARE TOO HEAVY TO POST.**

### **Available from the Shop:**

Sketch book

A selection of drawing materials, e.g. pencils, pens, charcoal, Conté, crayons etc.

Scissors, tape

Paint brushes

### **Please bring any of the above, if you have them, and in addition:**

Apron

Enclosed toe footwear (essential)

Camera

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. Students may work unsupervised on agreed projects once they have satisfied the tutor as to their competence. There may be restrictions on the equipment available to students in the tutor's absence. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.