

SHORT COURSE DETAILS

WE6732 WHEEL THROWN ANIMALS AND FIGURES IN CLAY

Tutor: SUSAN HALLS

Dates: WEEKEND FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY – SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

The potter's wheel is more than just a tool for making vessels. A simple adaptation of the technique and a whole new world of sculptural possibilities opens up for you. It's an exciting way to explore making figurative and animal forms, giving them a whole new lease of life.

Through a series of ongoing demonstrations you'll be shown how to adapt and construct wheel thrown forms to make exciting sculptural pieces. Dogs, horses, elephants, frogs – most four legged animals make excellent subjects – as do birds and human figures. Pieces will generally need to have a base (though in some cases this can be removed later). Figures can be paired with animal forms – such as horse and rider or made independently or in groups.

The process allows you to sit at the wheel and construct the sculptures in situ. I'll show you how to throw shapes off the hump, building the piece while the clay is still very soft, how to support it and use electric heat guns to strategically dry as you go, helping avoid the technical difficulties of working with soft floppy clay. Ears, eyes, nostrils, tails etc, all can be thrown! The aim is to allow the distinctive character of the wheel to inform and influence the overall look of the sculpture i.e. aim to make pieces that have a thrown quality.

The speed of throwing will force you to think and work with more spontaneity and hopefully encourage a sense of play in your experimentation. Planning each piece by simple sketching will encourage ideas and allow you to see the overall form as essential basic shapes, shapes that can then be thrown and used as the starting point for building your piece. The inherent speed of the technique allows for greater output so you can expect to make several pieces during the workshop. Working this way is extremely liberating and the objective is to encourage risk taking, not only with the design of the piece but in the way the clay is handled. It forces you to become less precious and discourages over working. You'll be amazed at what can be achieved embracing the wheel with a different intention. Pieces could retain a functional element or be entirely sculptural.

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

For those who have taken a related course or have some existing skills, and for more experienced practitioners who want to expand skills. The focus is on working towards independent practice.

Basic throwing skills are necessary.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Susan graduated from the RCA in 1990. Based in London she exhibited internationally and taught in many of the UK's colleges and universities. In 1998 she moved to the USA where she continues her practice. She has written two books for Lark publishers – Animals and Figures and Pinch Pottery.

TIMETABLE:

Arrival day: Friday 10 February

From 4.00pm	Arrival for residential students
6.45pm	Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm–9.00pm	First teaching session – attendance is an essential part of the course.

Other days: Saturday 11 February

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; workshops are available up to 10pm for those wishing to work on providing this has been discussed with the tutor. These sessions are untutored

Departure day: Sunday 12 February

(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:

Consider animal subjects, mammals and birds best lend themselves to interpretation, though other subjects could be considered. Some subject research material is useful ie printed copies from books or online or photographs. Do not bring too much – too many borrowed images can lead you astray!

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.

Materials included in the course fee:

The course fee includes the cost of all clay, glazing and firing costs – large work in size and quantity may be charged extra.

Available from the Shop:

Steel plaster working tool (very good substitute for a potter's knife)

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

Cutting wire, small sponges, good sharp potter's knife (preferably NOT stainless steel) scalpel blade with handle, electric heat gun (paint stripper, very simple) if you have one, otherwise expect to share. Sketch book and drawing materials.

PLEASE BRING A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED POSTCARD WITH YOU (or a card with your name and email address) if you wish to leave your work at the College for glazing and firing, so that we can let you know when your pieces are ready for collection.

Please note that your work will be kept for collection for one year from the postmark date on your returned postcard or email.

Firing and glazing of raw, finished pieces: Students normally have three options at the end of the course:

1. Students may leave any raw, finished pieces that they wish to keep, for biscuit firing, basic glazing and re-firing by the College, for collection at a later date.
2. Students may leave raw, finished pieces for biscuit firing at the College. They may then book a place on a Glazing Day – the details and course fee are advertised in the short course programme – and learn how to glaze their work themselves. This work will be re-fired and available for collection at a later date. (There is no further charge for the glazing materials if you choose to book a glazing day.)
3. Students are free to take away their unfired pieces for firing and glazing elsewhere.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. There are no health and safety restrictions on access to this studio/teaching space in the absence of the tutor. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.