

## SHORT COURSE DETAILS

### S5D07412 RAKU AND FIRING TECHNIQUES

Tutor: ALISON SANDEMAN

Dates: 5 DAYS SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER – FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER

## ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

Raku week at West Dean brings together creative making, using stoneware and Raku clays, and the excitement of the Raku glaze firings. You are able to focus on throwing or hand building techniques or both as you wish. Ideas are developed combining design and form with practical aspects of pottery.

Raku is a Japanese technique originally developed for making the tea ceremony wares but adapted in the West for a broader usage. Pots are glazed and decorated outdoors and then fired in a hot kiln to 1000c. After firing, the pots are plugged into sawdust and water to achieve the exciting raku effects.

### Sunday Evening

Our first session starts with a short introductory talk and discussion followed by a practical session on clay preparation (wedging and kneading). The tutor will give a couple of demonstrations and the evening will end with a short audio visual presentation on the Raku process.

If you are beginning your experience of working with clay, the emphasis will be on getting the 'feel' for clay and making. This will include clay preparation, making thumb/ pinch pots, learning the hand building techniques of coiling and slabbing and simple decoration. There may be opportunities to try out the potters wheel. If you already possess technical skills you will be encouraged to further develop these skills and your creative ideas.

Further audio visual sessions will take place as relevant to the course mainly in the evenings.

The three kilns we use for the Raku firings are wood and gas fired. The wood fired kiln and one of gas kilns have been built by ourselves, and students will have the option of building/ or learning how the kilns are constructed. Kiln plans, material lists and glaze recipes will be available.

Most of the work for the Raku is made in the early part of the week. While this is drying and being biscuit fired, we continue with the general course and then the glazing and Raku firings take place on Thursday and Friday.

THE TUTOR WOULD LIKE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH YOU BY PHONE NEARER TO THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE TO HELP WITH THE PLANNING AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS – PLEASE SEE REQUIRED PREPARATION ON PAGE 2.

### LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

A subject focused course that is delivered to suit any level of experience from beginner to advanced practitioner. A structured start is followed by guided independent practise.

## ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Alison Sandeman is a long-standing tutor at West Dean. She makes functional individual pieces in stoneware, porcelain and Raku, at her well established pottery studio on a farm, near Chichester. She has a special interest in outdoor firing techniques and is currently working with University College London on a research project on ancient making techniques.

## TIMETABLE:

### Arrival day: Sunday 29 October

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 – <b>attendance is an essential part of the course.</b> See page 1 for details.

### Other days: Monday 30 October to Thursday 2 November

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 – you are able to work in the pottery until 10pm.

### Departure day: Friday 3 November

(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:

It would be good but not essential to come with some ideas, functional and/or sculptural, and any natural objects for inspiration.

**Please email the tutor** at [nutwood@waitrose.com](mailto:nutwood@waitrose.com) at least two weeks before the start date of your course with your name, details of the course you are attending (ie course ref, title and dates) and your telephone number so that the tutor can contact you to discuss the course and answer any queries you may have.

**Course Reading List:** For those interested in reading any books before the course, the following may be in your public library:

*The Craft of the Potter* by Michael Casson (BBC Publications)  
*The Potter's Book* by Bernard Leach (Faber & Faber)  
*The Complete Potter's Companion* by Tony Birks (Conran Octopus)  
*The Potter's Manual* by Kenneth Clark (McDonalds)  
*A Raku Handbook* by John Dickerson  
*Raku* by Ian Byres (Batsford)  
*Raku* by Tim Andrews (A&C Black)  
*Raku – Investigations into Fire* by David Jones (Crowood Press)  
*Raku* by John Mathieson (A&C Black)  
*10,000 Years of Pottery* by Emmanuel Cooper (British Museum Press)  
*Sources of Inspiration* by Carolyn Genders (A&C Black)

### **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 is the cost of all clay, glazing and firing costs (large work in size and quantity may be charged extra).

Basic tool kits are provided in the Pottery for use on the course.

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

Pottery tools, pottery knife

Rough paper, notebook, or sketch pad and pencil

Wood or plastic ruler, plastic set square

Watercolour paint brushes and/or Chinese brushes

Natural sponge

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

Overall/apron

Old towel

Books of interest and some natural objects

Suitable clothing for Raku firing – eg: jeans, old sweatshirt, long sleeved shirt, covered shoes and waterproofs!

NB. Double layers will need to be worn when unpacking the kilns

Torch

20 Clean plastic shopping bags

Cardboard boxes for taking away the finished Raku work

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.**

#### **Any stoneware unfired pots that need firing can be left for the following:**

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 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 pots for firing and glazing elsewhere.

### **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.

**Please note** that tutor supervision is required at all times during the Raku firing, also it is essential that suitable clothing (see above) and covered shoes are worn for the Raku firing day.