

SHORT COURSE DETAILS

S4D08604: MAKING COLOURED GLASS BOWLS

Tutor: ALEX POWELL

Dates: 4 DAYS SUNDAY 17 MARCH – THURSDAY 21 MARCH

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

This course builds on your existing skills in glass cutting, either from having worked with stained glass or with kiln-formed glass.

A basic knowledge of 'warm glass' – using fusing and slumping techniques to form three-dimensional glass in the kiln – will help you benefit fully from this practical experience. With the focus of the course on designing and making a set of glass bowls and platters, you are shown a range of fusing techniques using sheet glass, powdered glass frit and metal inclusions. A selection of commercial moulds will be available for slumping the glass into, including shapes to create various bowls, dishes and platters.

In producing this work, you develop your glass-cutting techniques, learn how to create a glass blank by combining coloured glass with fusing and learn how to work with moulds to create three-dimensional glass forms. During the course you get to grips with the glass kiln, developing an understanding of what happens to glass in the kiln during a firing cycle, and learning how to load and programme a kiln so as to produce perfect, durable glass pieces.

The course covers glass cutting in detail, perfecting the techniques for cutting straight lines, strips, gentle curves, deeper curves and circles. Those who have been working with glass for a while may have picked up bad habits and this course will help to identify and transform them into good techniques.

A large selection of materials will be provided including glass sheet, powdered glass frits, stringers and noodles, metal inclusions such as copper sheet, mesh and wire, and products that can be painted between layers of glass. You work towards a set of final pieces which you produce in your allotted space across five kiln firings. Teaching is a combination of methods: showing a wide range of samples – as well as photographs in books – to illustrate possibilities, demonstrations of techniques and group evaluation of the glass coming out of the kiln.

You learn the finer details of how to fuse or slump at different levels inside the kiln to achieve different effects in glass. Technical information is available in handouts which cover kiln processes, chart the firing cycle for more complex fusing and slumping and explain strain points, soaking and annealing.

By the end of the course, you will have made a range of glass tableware: a large bowl, several small bowls and a selection of smaller samples which could be used as coasters. You will have improved and perfected your glass cutting technique, cutting accurately and efficiently and using a range of scoring and breaking tools correctly. Having learnt a variety of decorative effects, you should also have built on existing skills in order to develop your personal language in kiln-formed glass.

First evening

8–10pm

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. Sketching (both during the class and afterwards) will be encouraged at this stage to plan designs.

Please note: although the class officially runs for an hour (8–9pm), 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 / by hand.

The session starts with a slideshow of glasswork from previous courses to inspire and show you how to realise your ideas in glass. After a short induction into health and safety, you see a demonstration of glass cutting to recap on skills that may have been forgotten and the tutor assesses your technique to offer advice for improvement.

11–12.30pm Demonstrations: – cutting gentle curves, deeper curves and circles.
– using grozing pliers, grozing and nibbling.
Cutting and assembling glass for bowl blanks.
Unloading the kiln – group review.

The tutor demonstrates how to use the glass cutter to tap out gentle curves in glass, the techniques for cutting deeper curves and the use of the circle cutter. Other tools are demonstrated to show how to break glass, and clean up the edge of the glass by grozing and nibbling. Students practise their skills by cutting the base glass for some of their bowls.

The lunch break gives students time to absorb what has been seen and start thinking about designs for tableware.

2–3.30pm Showing samples: choosing glass and combining colours.
Cutting and assembling glass for bowl blanks.

You are shown colour samples in fused glass over a lightbox and are encouraged to explore the full range of colours available in the glass. The tutor shows you how to create nuanced shades of colour by layering and combining different coloured glass.

The rest of the afternoon session is an intensive period of individual work to cut and assemble the glass pieces for the bowl blanks. The tutor discusses your designs individually with you to plan a schedule of work for the course.

4–5.30pm Demonstration: use of stringers and noodles, using heat to bend and curve.
Loading the kiln – using layers to obtain different levels of fusing.

This session includes a demonstration of how to add other decorative detail into the glass. Stringers and noodles are long thin glass pieces which can be bent and manipulated over the flame of a candle, and students will be shown how to incorporate these into the work.

You help to load the kiln, building the shelves up at different levels to exploit the temperature differential inside the kiln to get the results they want. The tutor explains how to use kiln shelves to create both fusing and slumping temperatures in the same kiln.

After supper: Optional Evening Slideshow – on tutor's personal work.

DAY 2

9–10.30am Book / slideshow images of glass vessels.
Showing samples: example bowls, platters and slumped pieces.

You start the morning off with an intensive visual session as a source of inspiration for your designs. You look at a series of images of glass vessels in both books and on a laptop slideshow, and these will show how far the fusing and slumping techniques can be taken. The tutor also shows a selection of sample vessels and pieces to focus on what is possible within the scope of the course. You are encouraged to share ideas and discuss design solutions for the work being made.

11–12.30pm Demonstration: use of frits: sieving and making use of templates.
You will already be using glass frits in all grades from powder to coarse chunks but now the tutor demonstrates the use of sieves and templates (both ready-made or purpose-cut) to create subtle

overlapping shapes and colours in the glass. The effect of frits below, between and on top of the glass is investigated with further samples and demonstrations.

2–3.30pm Unloading the kiln – group review.
Talk: – slumping into moulds: how to get the right results.
 – CoE of glass

After lunch you unload the results of the second firing, and analyse the results: why anything might have gone wrong and (hopefully!) what has worked, both aesthetically and technically.

You are introduced to the variety of moulds in more detail and are shown how to get good results from both ceramic and stainless steel moulds. The tutor explains the coefficient of expansion which relates to how the glass expands with heat and contracts as it cools.

4–5.30pm Demonstration: the glass grinder / diamond pads for finishing.
Loading the kiln – using layers to obtain different levels of fusing.

The tutor demonstrates simple coldworking, using the glass grinder to abrade larger areas of glass, and diamond pads to finish the edges before your glass goes back in to be slumped. Finally the students help to load the kiln, creating different levels for fusing and slumping.

DAY 3

9–10.30am Demonstration: creating relief in the glass.
Showing samples: textural effects.

In the morning the tutor explains how to use fibre paper and loose plaster inside the mould to create texture and low level relief in the glass in the slumping process. You are shown samples to illustrate various textural effects.

11–12.30pm Demonstration: Glassline products.

You are introduced to the range of Glassline products which are colours that can be painted or sprayed between two layers of glass or on the glass surface. The tutor shows you a variety of samples to illustrate the effects that are possible using these products and demonstrates different applications of the colours.

2–3.30pm Slumping into / through / over different forms.
Unloading the kiln – group review.

You have the opportunity to try out more experimental pieces which will open up the possibilities in slumping for future development and experimentation. The tutor describe the use of other slumping accessories such as drop out rings, stainless steel beakers and freeform pieces of kiln shelf to create three dimensional forms in the glass. We then open the kiln and review the results of the third firing.

4–5.30pm Intensive making session.

During an intensive working session in the afternoon you are given one-to-one help and advice from the tutor, but all students are encouraged to create an atmosphere of mutual support through the sharing of ideas.

DAY 4

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

In the morning the tutor goes through the technical aspects of glass fusing and slumping and what happens to the glass during the firing cycle, giving you handouts for reference. For those that already regularly use a kiln, the tutor runs through a troubleshooting discussion to help identify and rectify problems with fusing and slumping. Perhaps you are thinking about buying a kiln for yourself, in which case you can ask advice about what to look for. The tutor also explains further the compatibility of glass and the pros and cons of different ranges of fusing glass.

11–12.30pm Unloading the kiln – group review.
Cutting and assembling glass for coasters.

You open the kiln and look at the glass from the previous day's work. You begin work on the final project which is a flat piece or set of pieces, perhaps a set of coasters to complement the vessels that have already been made.

2–3.30pm Intensive making session.
Loading the kiln.

The final afternoon is an intensive making session, bringing together all knowledge and skills acquired over the course. 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: 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 practise.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Alex Powell 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: Sunday 17 March

From 4.00pm	Arrival for residential students
5.30pm	Workshops available for dropping off equipment and materials
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. Showing samples: levels of fusing, inclusions and frits Experimentation: assembling glass for experimental palettes Loading the kiln – placing glass at different levels

After an introduction where students are shown examples of what can be achieved during the course, students get immediately involved. The first evening session is a freeform exploration of possibilities. Students have access to pre-cut pieces of glass in all colours (hence no cutting skills necessary at this stage) and a range of glass products as well as metal inclusions to play with. The emphasis of this session is to 'play' and to experiment in order to find out about the different levels of fusing possible in the kiln. Students will be able to try things out on small palettes of glass which can later be slumped into moulds if desired.

Sketching (both during the class and afterwards) is encouraged at this stage to plan designs.

***Please note:** although the class is officially only 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 samples.*

Other days: Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 March

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes

Other days continued: Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 March

3.30pm	Tea
4.00pm	Afternoon classes continue
5.00pm	Classes finish
From 6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Evening working

Departure day: Thursday 21 March

(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, please vacate workshop by 3.30pm
3.30pm	Tea then departure

REQUIRED PREPARATION:

Students can read more about the course and see examples of the kind of work they will make at www.alex-r.com/teaching.htm

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 cost of glass, glass products and inclusions, kiln paper and plaster, and is in addition to any items you may purchase individually.

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

Paint brushes

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

Students should bring with them closed-in footwear (essential), an apron to protect clothing, sketchbooks and drawing implements. A digital camera would also be useful to record the appearance of the pre-fired glass.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The tutor will instruct students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. Please note that tutor supervision is required at all times when students work in this workshop. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.