

### **Project Assignment One**

Formal problem/Conceptual object:: Geometric Construction /Bowl, Pot, Sphere

Make a series of at least three objects that will allow you to explore the structural integrity of the simplest three dimensional geometric form, the sphere. Make at least one hemispherical bowl, at least one spherically derived cooking pot, and at least one enclosed sphere as a sculptural object. The diameter of each spherical shape must be at least the measure of the span of your outstretched hand, with a wall thickness not greater than that of your index finger.

Start by visualizing a sphere. Some examples of spheres are: basketball, turtle egg, the earth as seen from space, the structure of electrons orbiting the nucleus of an atom. What you should realize is that there is a virtual center point from which all points on the edge of the sphere are equidistant. Since you are using ceramic material to be fired you must make the sphere hollow. By visualizing the curving wall of a globe you can imagine where to place the wet clay as you construct the wall enclosing a spherical volume.

Your technical goal is to make a single curve of unbroken line which gives structure and balance to the wall of the sphere. An ideal wall would be of even thickness throughout. You should allow the interior volume to support the exterior form, so compression on both sides of the wall should be equal. You probably will not be able to build the wall to an absolutely even thickness but by trimming in the leatherhard stage of dryness, you can alter thickness as desired. It is essential to control the drying of your work so that you can continue to change and improve the form in the leatherhard stage. Once you let clay dry to bone-dry hardness, it is more difficult to change the overall form without risk of cracking or scraping the wall too thin in one spot. One reason for making an even wall thickness is that when the work is fired, it will heat more evenly, stressing the material less as it goes through the physical and chemical transformations of shrinkage and silica conversion.

Use a mold commonly called a *puki*, to start the construction and continue to move the mold as the wet clay needs support. Maintain the curve of the sphere you are making by compressing from the inside of the wall. It is better to start working on three spheres simultaneously and let the wall of one sphere have time to stiffen as you work with wet clay on another sphere. By the time that you have added more wet clay to the third sphere, your first sphere will have firmed up its wall and be able to hold the shape you want as you add more wet clay and expand the volume of the sphere.

The surface of at least one of your objects should be prepared for pit firing by burnishing the clay in the leatherhard stage, followed by an application and polishing of terra sigillata in the bone dry stage. The spherical objects that you chose not to prepare for pit firing may be decorated with slip or carved in low relief prior to bisque firing.

**Introduction:** Tuesday, January 6

**First greenware critique:** Tuesday, January 13

**Second greenware critique:** Tuesday, January 20

**Pit firing:** Saturday, February 28