

California State University, Sacramento
Department of Art
Art 86 Clay Sculpture
Fall 2004

Class hours & classroom : F 900am-250pm, Kadema 101

Instructor: Tom Decker

Office hours: TTh 1130am - 1200pm, or by appointment

Telephone & email: (916) 278.3914, decker@csus.edu

General description: This course intends to develop your skill in basic techniques of 3-dimensional form-making and to broaden your critical judgement as an introduction to the discipline of expressing ideas visually in ceramic sculpture. A directed exploration in coil, slab, carving, and pinch techniques in high and low-fire clay establish a foundation for personal process in the medium. Glazes will serve to reinforce distinctive visual form and enrich a relationship to concept in each artwork. Critical judgement of spatial form will be developed through studio practice, critique, research and lectures on historical and contemporary examples of sculpture.

Educational outcomes: 1) You will demonstrate skill in making clay sculpture and the resulting objects will be reviewed in group critiques.
2) By way of visual analysis, your increased understanding and appreciation of artwork will lead you to apprehend the principles on which aesthetic judgments are made.
3) You will apply processes of critical analysis appropriate to the medium during group critiques. You will summarize your analysis in written form for evaluation.

Project assignments: You have three projects to complete and schedule to follow towards their completion. You are required to work in series, i.e., making multiple objects related to the resolution of formal problems and conceptual issues. You must participate in the class by coming into the studio every class meeting and working diligently. The presentation of your work during regularly scheduled critiques is mandatory. Each project will have at least two greenware critiques. These critiques are crucial points in evaluating your development of technical skills and expressive ability.

Written assignments: Art 86, Clay Sculpture is an Area C4 General Education Course. As such, it contains a written component of instruction and evaluation. You are required to keep a small format artist's journal and make regular entries of thoughts, ideas, observations, and reflections on the subject of clay sculpture. In particular, you will summarize the critical analysis of your artwork following each critique and submit your journal for evaluation periodically. You will also be required to write a review of a current ceramic sculpture publication or exhibition of clay sculpture.

Grading: Grades in this class will be assigned as a result of your ability to integrate the subject matter in an expressive way. Expressive development is the goal. In order to earn a grade of "C" in the course, you must at least fulfill the technical requirements of the assigned projects and present your work for critique on the scheduled date for each phase of the projects. To earn a higher grade, you must not only achieve the technical standard of each assignment, but exceed the minimum requirements of the assignment in a way that shows creative thought and expression. If you miss a critique you should continue to work on the project on your own time after the critique date and submit the pieces for partial credit (up to but not after the date of the final critique). Work submitted for evaluation after the scheduled critique date will be graded at one letter grade lower than it would have been had the work been submitted on time. If you are not satisfied with your results on any one project you may find it is worth your time to make more objects and submit them to demonstrate your ability to critically analyze your work and improve it. The work that you undertake to improve your results on any project will be credited towards the improvement of your grade in the course. The following is an outline of the grading criteria for the course:

- A** Excellent work, outstanding skill in accomplishing assigned work, excellent technical and expressive quality integrated with exceptional creativity
- B** Better than average work, moderate skill in accomplishing assigned work, good technical and expressive quality integrated with some creativity
- C** Average work, average skill in accomplishing assigned work, modest technical and expressive quality integrated moderately
- D** Below average, lack of skill in accomplishing assigned work, less than acceptable technical and expressive quality poorly integrated
- F** Failing, failure to demonstrate skill or understanding of projects assigned, insufficient technical and expressive quality poorly integrated

Materials and equipment: You will need to purchase a ceramics tool kit at the student store if you don't already have one. You should provide your own water bucket and an towel. The average amount of clay you'll use is about 150 pounds. It can be purchased at the student bookstore in 25 pound bags. From time to time, recycled clay may be available here in the studio. You are required to clean up your work area and equipment after each use. To ensure safety use consideration and respect for other students and their work. There is equipment in the studio which requires training to use safely and efficiently. Ask for instruction before using any unfamiliar equipment. If you feel that you will be unable to safely undertake the physical activity required in this course please contact the instructor during office hours or classtime in your first week of class. Lockers are available to store your clay, and tools, but you must provide a lock and vacate the locker at the term's end.