

Micaela - Group Crit, 12th May 2017

Brief Explanation / Outline of Project – WHAT

I want to find a way to combine pottery with highly decorative surface designs where shape and surface are integral parts and unique to each piece. I don't want my figures to be representational but retain a sense of ambiguity. For example, I don't want them to have an up or down or suggest a definitive way how to place them. They are just supposed to suggest biomorphic qualities. Even though my designs may seem very controlled they are an instinctive response to the shape of the pottery figure. I also try to introduce less controlled processes such as the pouring of coloured clay slips. Even though I may have a rough idea of where I'm planning to go with each piece, each decorative stage demands a new response. Thus I don't draw or sketch out my designs beforehand. If something goes wrong – unless it is total irretrievable disaster – I will respond to it as a challenge to work with and adapt my decorating techniques. This way I'm hoping to keep myself fresh and prevent myself from churning out meaningless pretty objects.

Form, line, pattern, colour, texture and finish are important elements that need to be balanced. But I am also very aware that all this is best balanced by having empty/undecorated areas in my pieces to let the eye rest. I try to introduce plays with negative and positive spaces and colours and lines that continue and are disrupted, make sure to echo some design elements within a piece to keep them visually interesting, for the viewer to be able to look at it repeatedly and travel along its surfaces and discover new little anomalies. Even though the surfaces are heavily decorated I don't want it to be too perfect but retain a handmade quality.

Context / Rationale – WHY

To develop a unique and identifiable range of both sculptural and more functional pottery with enough scope for me to keep working at it for the foreseeable future.

- Sculptural: create bespoke high end pieces
- Functional: covering different market

Key Areas of Research / Key Activities – HOW

- Explore decorative styles by different people around the world: currently Pueblo Indians in North West US, Islamic geometric patterns.
- Decorating Techniques: e.g. Slips, Underglazes, On-glazes and Lustres
- Clays
- Glazes

Intended Outcomes - WHAT (again)

At the end of the course I hope to have a set of about 2 or 3 larger sculptural pieces linked by using surface patterns inspired by one design family, e.g. Pueblo. I may want one or so much larger centre piece and some much smaller pieces, such as the marquettes. I am aiming on also having groups of corresponding functional pottery pieces.